

# PICTURES AND PEN-PICTURES

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## FOREWORD

It was not without some hesitation that I approached the present work for, writing books is not strictly within the cadre of the profession of a cameraman and producer of short films. Off and on I contributed to some journals of India, and the reception given to my articles by the Editors greatly encouraged me. While wandering in search of filmic material, at the back of my mind I cherished the idea of writing a book of my impressions and experiences. The vicissitudinous career of a short film Director and the nomadic life of a newsreeler denied me the time to sit down to write a book.

Scarcity of rawstock material in the recent years and the difficulties in the way of film production greatly retarded my activities. I employed hours of this enforced leisure in looking into my photographs, travel notes, and scrap-book, and writing afresh of much that I had experienced—the result is this little volume.

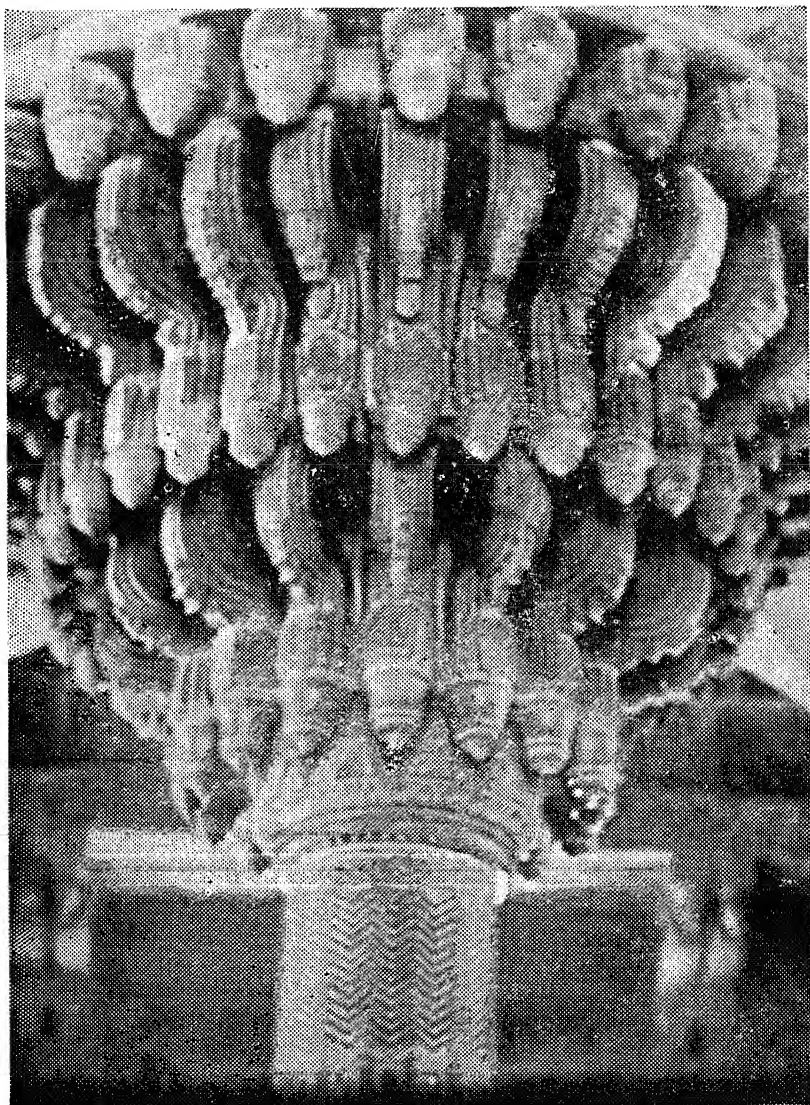
Some cities and places in which my sojourn was too brief to justify my writing about them, I have deliberately omitted; others of which I have records, I have refrained from including as I am averse to a lengthy publication by one, like me, who is a débutant in the world of writers.

The sixteen chapters embodied in this volume can be aptly termed as gleanings from my travel diary. The photographs can claim to be illustrative of much that is interesting in India. I present them for what they are worth—thoughts and impressions, if nothing else, of a cameraman in search of documentary material.

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In the Hall of Private Audience—the Diwan-i-Khas—stands this pillar of red sandstone. Upon this pillar the emperor sat to discuss with his courtiers,

## The Past in Visual Images

“It may take you a hundred days to reach those heights and see the Ganges issuing from the glaciers in all her mountain glory”, sums up the words of the hermit who dwells in the foothills of the Himalayas. As he speaks the eye ascends in wonderment to the snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas, the home of eternal snow, where spring the two great rivers the Ganges and the Indus—visions of the past float across the mind. Was it not in the valley of the Indus that man lived industriously long ages ago? How many millenniums have gone since the sages and seers sang hymns of the extant sacred Sanskrit books, the Vedas, in these cool sequestered vales of the Ganges? The song of the sighing wind and the melodious river carry the mind far away into the past; the jingle of pack-mules moving along the ridge recalls it to the present.....the reverie ends.

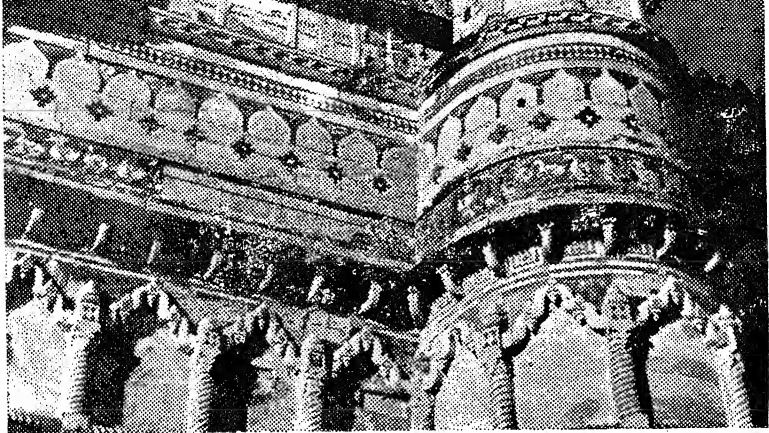
“Here stood the most ancient city of a once great kingdom:” it is an archaeologist that speaks, this time, as he describes one of the mounds of Taxila. The many treasures unearthed from these mounds in the Haro Valley assist the mind to picture life twenty-five centuries ago. Time had almost effaced from human memory the existence of these cities.

“This is the site where the epic battle was fought; here, Krishna revealed to Arjuna the Song of Philosophy”. A recluse utters words to this effect as the eye gazes on the vast plain. For a fleeting moment there is

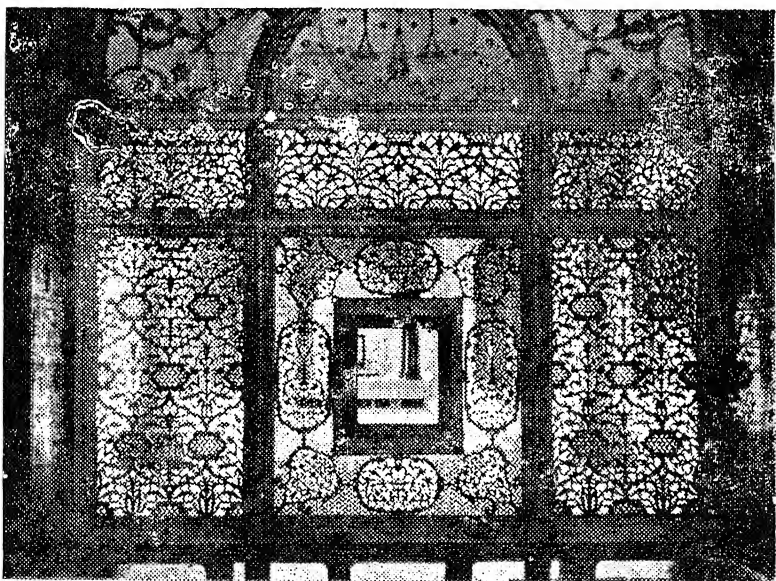
a virtual image of the battle as described in the Hindu epic, the *Mahabharata*—in reality, there is only a bare, vast plain.

Delhi has ever been imperial: as the Indraprastha of the epics and the Delhi of history. Through the ruins of seven Delhis the mind can conjure, like the successive scenes of a moving picture, the events of nearly two thousand years: scenes of the days when epic heroes wandered in exile and built their fort; of the days when the first sultanate of Delhi was established and Qutb-ud-din Aibak commanded the construction of the Qutb Minar; of the days when the peacock throne stood on the marble pedestal in the palace of the Red Fort and an emperor gave private audience to his courtiers. "If there is a paradise on earth it is this, it is this, it is this", reads the inscription in Persian; inlaid walls, marble floors and water channels, fligreed windows and finely worked ceilings, fill the mind with pictures of the splendour and magnificence characteristic of the life of the imperial Mughals.

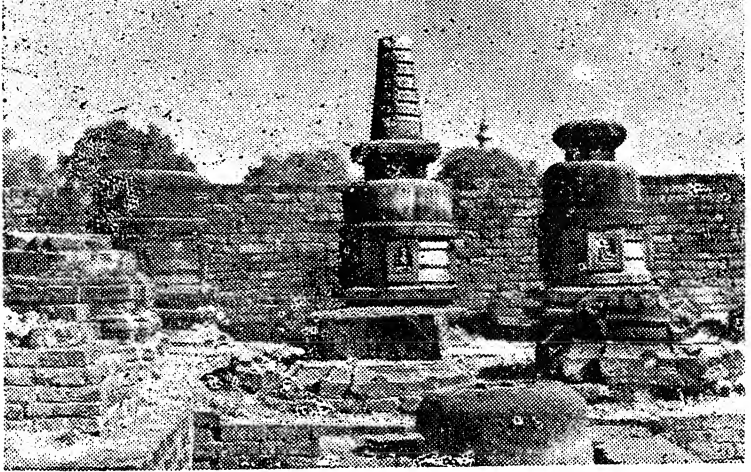
Happy are they who come here to wash away their sins in this river of the gods, the Ganges, at the ghats of Benares. The scenes of pilgrims bathing from the ghats has changed but little, it seems, through the centuries; for, from very ancient times, Benares has been held sacred. How many millions of pilgrims have bathed at these ghats? How many rajas have ruled this city? How many saints have found asylum in this Benares? Even the Buddha came here. Blurred visions crowd upon the mind; the story in the Buddhist scriptures of the Wise One flying across the river like the King of Birds, translates itself into picture. To



The magnificent Fort of Gwalior is another instance of how monuments bring the past into the present for mind and eye to admire. Man Singh, the great Rajput general of Akbar and his son, Jehangir, built this palace that crowns the steep rocky hill above the city of Gwalior.



Filgheed windows, like this one in the Red Fort of Delhi, and finely decorated ceilings, tell of the splendour and magnificence characteristic of the life of the Imperial Mughals.



Ruins of a Buddhist monastery in Sarnath near Benares. To Sarnath the Buddha came after crossing the Ganges, and here he first preached his Gospel or, as the Buddhist Scriptures say: 'The Wise One set the Wheel of the Law in motion.'



Beneath the bustle of everyday Indian life an ever-present past is discernible. This street scene in Chidambaram, South India, is typical of how traditions play an intimate part in the life of millions

Sarnath the Buddha went after crossing the Ganges. From the ruins of the monasteries of Sarnath rises the picture of the time when Buddhist monks from far and wide followed in the footsteps of the Buddha.

"His Majesty plans splendred edifices...." writes Abul Fazl, the historian of Akbar's court. The Great Gateway of his deserted capital, Fatehpur-Sikri, is a tangible proof of these words. Each monument, every building, even the tanks and wells were built to a plan. It was in this capital that, for many years, Akbar cherished the hope of a united India and one religion for all—a unity of religions he himself practised. Despite the echoing emptiness of this dead capital, illusion recreates the familiar scene of Akbar in the Hall of Private Audience, and of a populous city. Visual images come and vanish in a trice—only the emptiness remains.

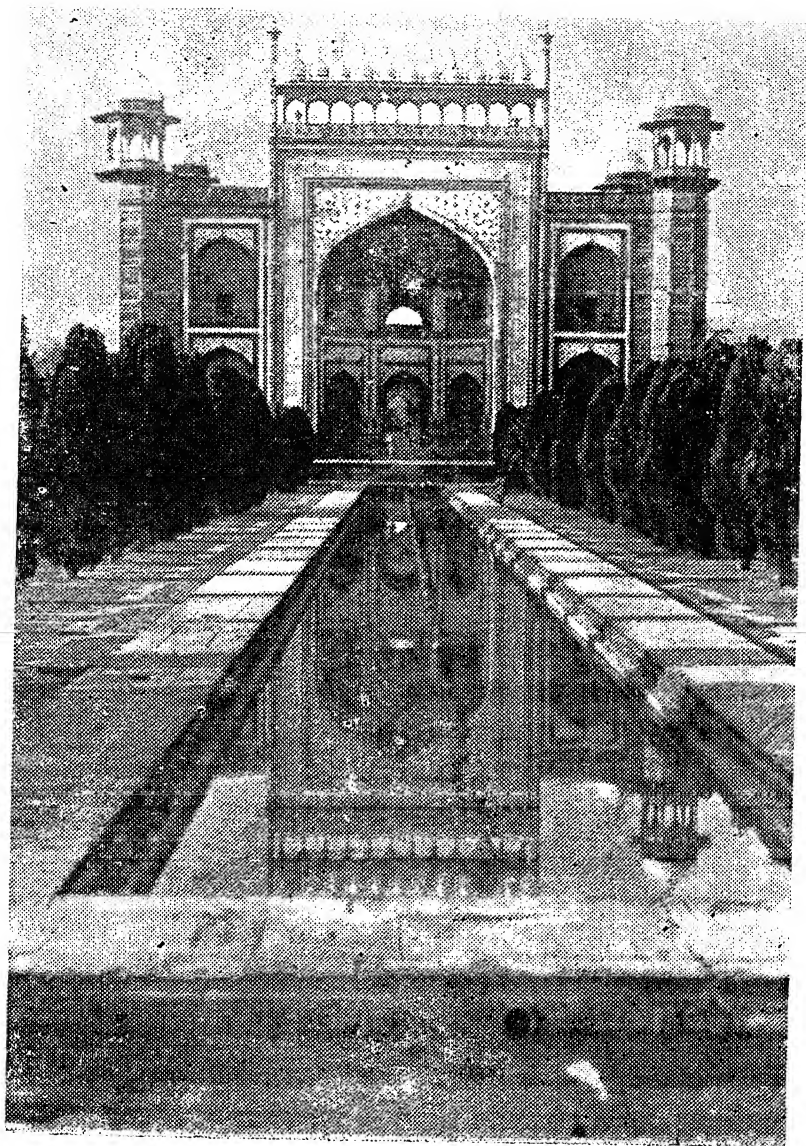
Cloud-filled South Indian skies form the background to giant temple towers. Only some fifteen centuries ago the artists chiselled these pyramidical summits that crown the gateways to the shrines of cherished gods. Sovereigns patronized these mighty works of art, artisans achieved them. As the eye admires the beauty of the carvings that skilled artists bequeathed to posterity, the mind tries to conjecture the busy lives that were consecrated to the embellishment of religion with art.

North, East, South, and West, beneath the bustle of everyday Indian life an ever-present past is discernible. Temples, mosques, sanctuaries, deserted towns and ruins, and the traditional rites maintained in living cities reflect the past in the *tableau-vivant* of the cities of India today. The latest strokes of Time's brush to this scene are



vivid in the busy cities with their industries and offices; their automobiles and tramcars; and the railways and planes that link town, city, and country together. On the canvas of an ancient civilization Time and history have created the India of our day.

Some of the impressions gathered by the mind and the eye while roaming in India are recorded in the chapters that follow—records which I owe to both Quill and Camera.



Entrance to the tomb of Akbar at Sikandra, near Agra.

## At the Gate of the Ganges

WHERE the Ganges leaves the hills and comes to the plains is Rikkikesh, a grey little village where hill-folk with narrow slit eyes and high cheek bones come from their mountain homes over the great suspension bridge called the Swing of Lakshmana (Lakshmanjhula), to trade their simple wares. Baby monkeys in their mothers' wake race one another up the thick steel cables of the bridge; yet, long before the age of steel, the Swing of Lakshmana existed. Here, tradition avers, the heroes of the epic, *Ramayana*, passed through Hardwar and Rikkikesh, and in this same spot did sling a bridge—was it of lianas or of ropes?

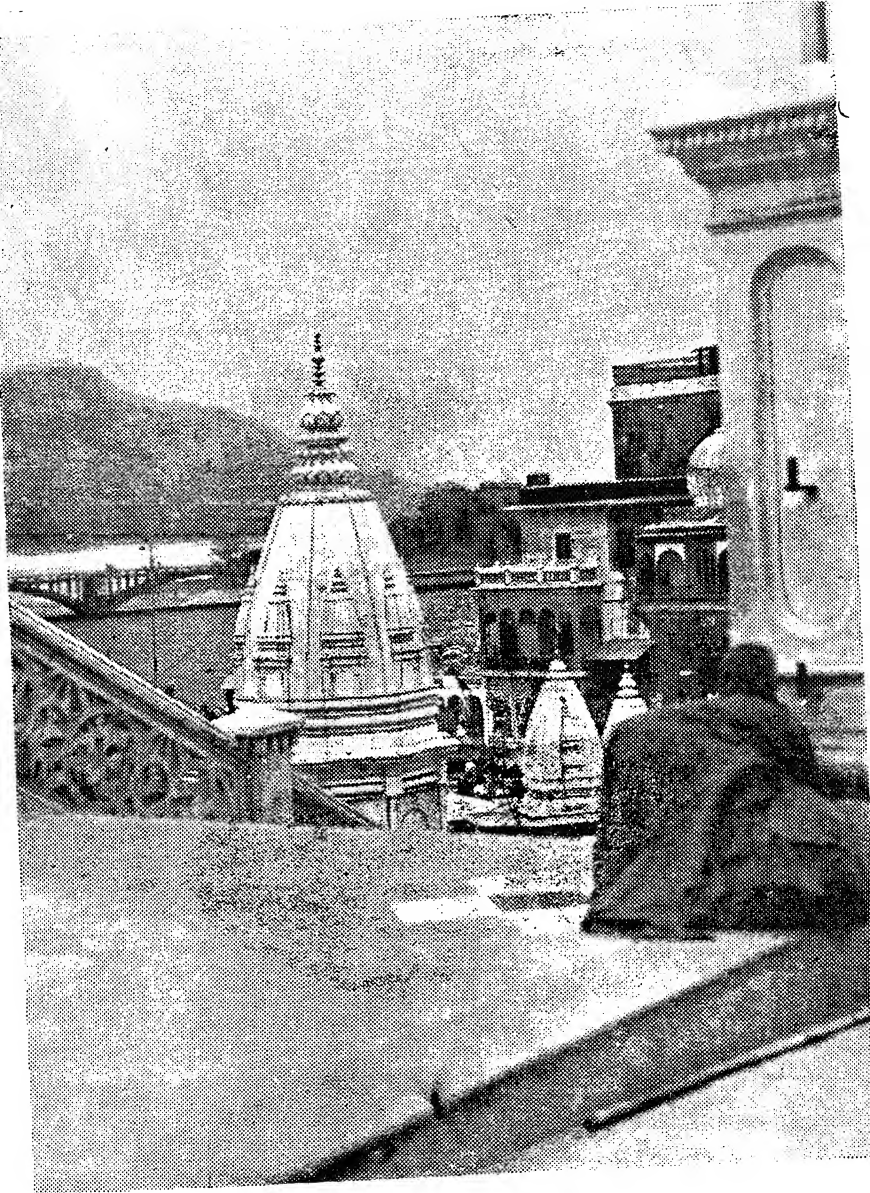
Just below this Rikkikesh the pale green transparent waters divide into channels that speed, powerful and melodious, between wooded islands, down to Hardwar where they once more unite. The temple-crowned Silver Hill (Chandi Pahad) watches over the transformation of the Ganges from a mountain torrent into a powerful stream—transformed, as it were, from tempestuous maidenhood into matronly grace.

Hardwar, ancient and holy pilgrim resort resting on one of the channels, was built round the spot where, according to the followers of Vishnu, Lord Hari left the imprint of his feet; or, as the followers of Siva would have it, where Hara (Siva) trod this very spot.

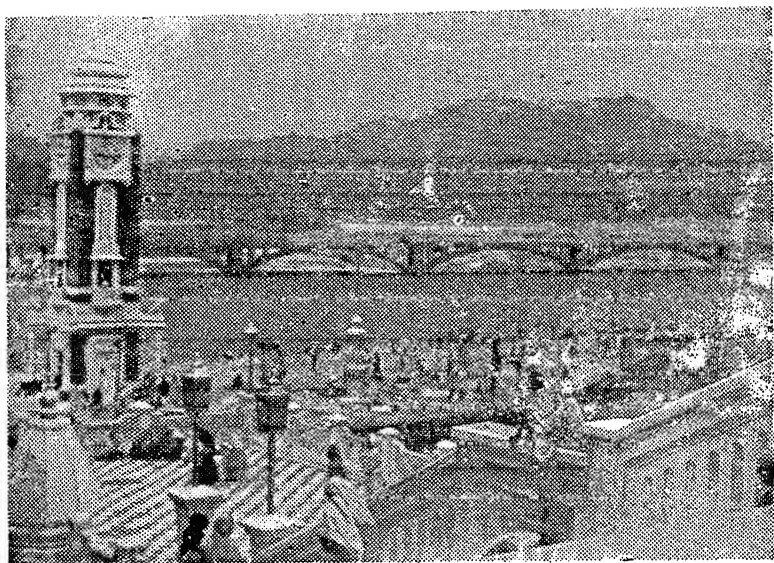
Since ancient times this has been a station on the pilgrim route to the Kumaon shrines; since ancient

times pilgrims have trodden the large flag-stones that pave the narrow streets that change direction at abrupt angles and lead into tiny, unsuspected squares made bright by piles of rich and varied fruit. Pilgrims have catered to their wants at one or the other of the close-packed booths that sell tasty food, savoury tea, sweet-scented flowers, or coloured baskets of graceful shapes. Picturesque balconied houses with Ganges-cleansed clothes hung out to dry, line the streets and tower above the booths; yet, Hardwar streets are not dark, for the limpid mountain air pervades the town and the bright, joyful sun playfully catches and lights up a sparkle from a polished apple, a brass vessel, or from the glossy tresses of a maiden pilgrim. Down in the crystalline waters all along the ghats, innumerable fish, from the tiniest silver thread to arrogant black giants the size of plantain trunks, sport and jostle one another for favours from devotees. There are neither fishermen nor fishing nets, for the fish of Hardwar are sacred.

The first day of the Hindu solar year dawns—it is the great religious fair of Hardwar. Every twelve years this festival, the Great Kumbh Mela, takes place; the Little, or Half Kumbh is every six. While Hardwar prepares for this Kumbh Mela for months ahead, pilgrims from every corner of India take the road to this holy spot. Sadhus and ascetics, religious leaders and leaders of every Hindu community meet in Hardwar; here, caparisoned elephants carry them from shrine to ghat and ghat to shrine during the festivities, and elephant processions occur almost every day, just as in ages gone by. Only the newsreel cameraman



Ancient and holy pilgrim resort is Hardwar. To its ghats come devotees in their hundreds, day after day ; but, for the great fair of Kumbh, *Kumbh Mela*, every twelve years, the pilgrims come in millions.



General view of the principal and present-day bathing ghats of Hardwar,

brings a twentieth century touch to the scene ! On the most important day of this festival, when Jupiter enters the sign of Aquarius, the bathing ghats offer a stupendous spectacle: troops of pilgrims in their thousands converge to the bank of the sacred river to cleanse themselves and be fit to pray. This is every sixth and twelfth year ; but, festival or no festival, there are always pilgrims in Hardwar.

With the earliest glimmerings of dawn a priest entones the ancient Sanskrit prayers that mingle with the never-ceasing gurgle of the river ; a keen, invigorating breeze blows across the swift waters ; the pale moon fades back into the opalescent sky—a new day has dawned over Hardwar. Already bathers hasten to the ghats, already the sun's rays warm the water-frozen limbs—and so it was with the early Aryans, and so it is today.

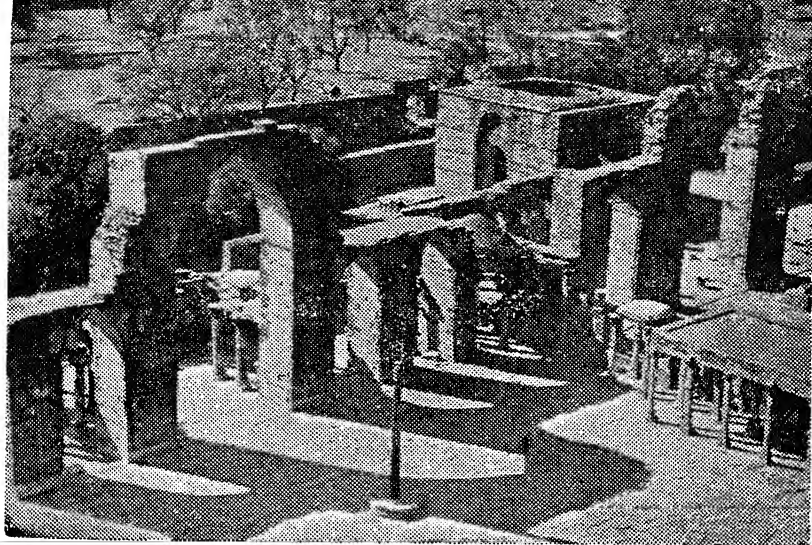
## Delhi, The City Imperial

It was a descendant of Genghis Khan, the Lame Timur, "one of the most formidable conquerors and most terrible scourges the world has ever seen", who crossed the Indus with a force of 90,000, proclaimed himself King of Delhi, only to stay a fortnight in his capital. Through Hardwar and the Punjab he left India loaded with wealth, leaving in his wake anarchy, famine, and pestilence.

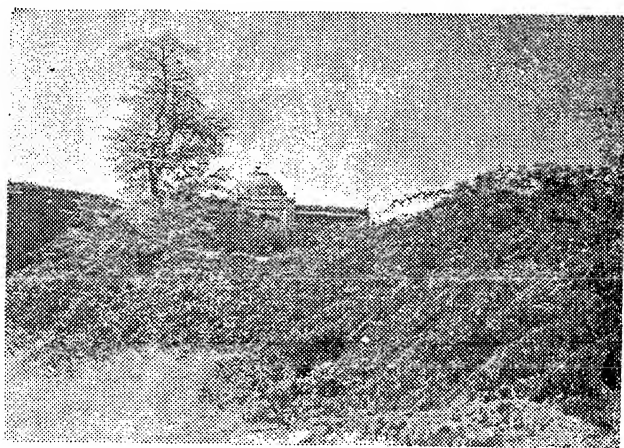
It is a far cry to Delhi! *Dilli dur ast*, sighed, perhaps, Babur the Lion as he crossed the Khyber into India and sensed the great tremor and alarm in his troops. None the less, he descended to the plains, fought the Battle of Paniput, won the Battle of Bayana, and established himself in Delhi. "By the grace and mercy of Almighty God", wrote Babur in his Memoirs, "this difficult affair was made easy to me,...." Unlike Timur, Babur had come to stay, and he breathed his last in Agra; his body was taken to Kabul and laid in a garden that he loved. What Timur did not leave behind him, Babur left: a dynasty of brilliant emperors, the Mughals, that ruled India from imperial Delhi.

Why did Babur come to Delhi? As a youthful exile staying with the headman of a village in Turkestan, he listened to his host's aged mother recounting tales of India related to her by her brother who had served in the army of Timur during his invasion of India. Babur heard these "glowing accounts of the wonders of Hindustan, its fertile plains, magnificent cities, and

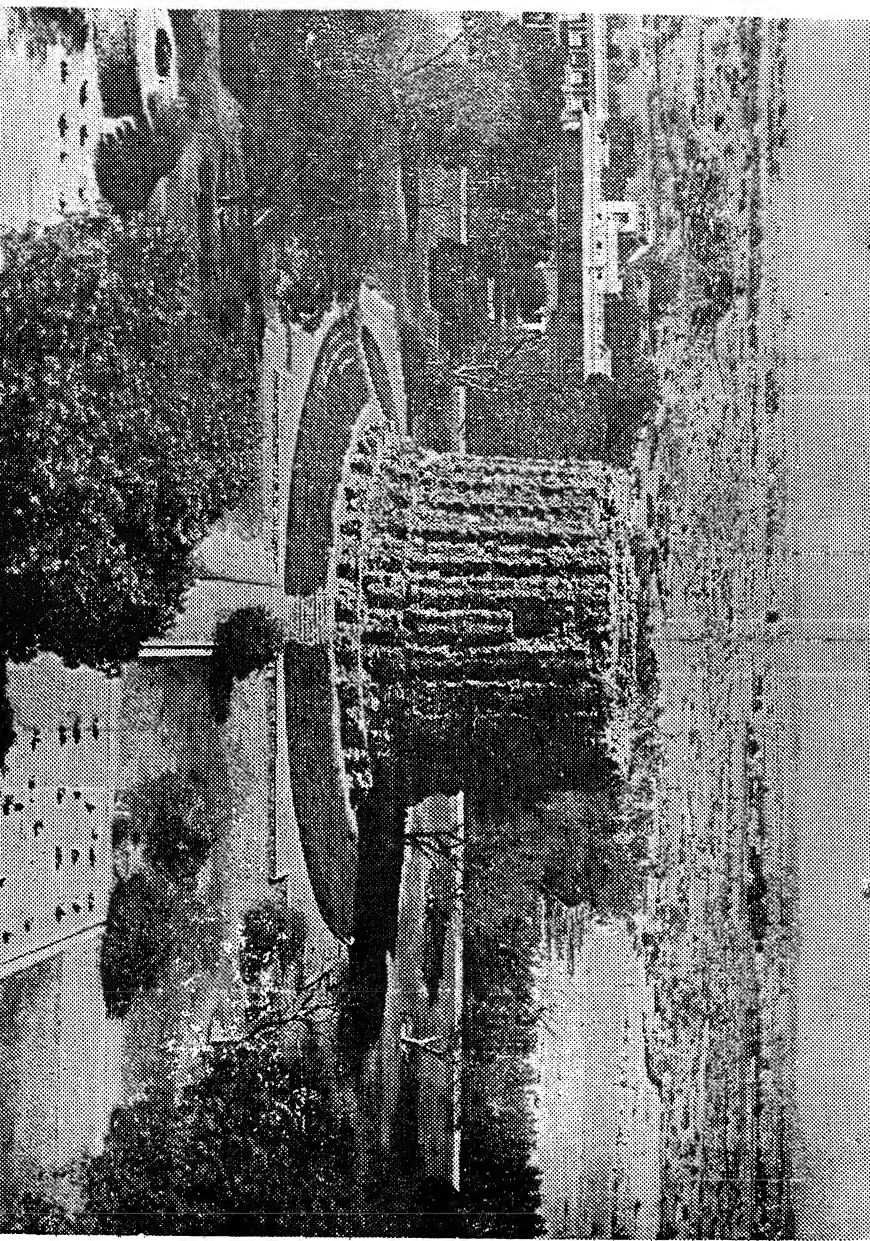




In the gardens of the Qutb can be seen the ruins of the city of the last Hindu ruler of Delhi, Prithviraj. Seen from the top of the Minar, these ruins present a sad yet impressive view.



When Indraprastha was the name of Delhi, this was the fort of the epic princes, the Pandavas. It is the most ancient of all the forts in Delhi of our day and is known, aptly, as the *Purana Qilla*, or ancient fort. It was within the ruined walls of this large fort that Humayun built his city, the *Din Panah*, also now in ruins.



boundless wealth," and his young mind began to dream of a dominion far greater than Samarkhand. So, when he came to India, he came to Delhi, the Capital of this country.

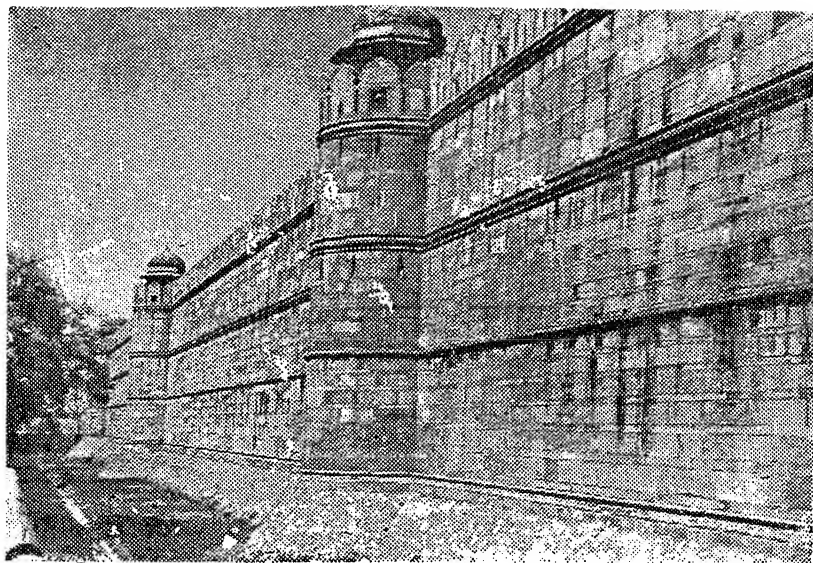
Like the beads in the rosary of history six ruined cities of Delhi, strewn haphazard on the right bank of the Jumna, each tell the story of its successive phases through the centuries; while Old Delhi and New Delhi of our day form an unbroken link between Mughal times and the British Raj. Most ancient of all is the solitary Old Fort (Puran Qilla) of the epic age; the Qutb Minar marks the site where the first Mohammedan dynasty of kings built its seat over the ruins of the capital of the last Hindu king of Delhi, Prithviraj. Seven temples were used in the construction of the Qutb Minar, and nothing now remains of the earlier city save a few columns and arches, exquisitely carved, and a stout metal pillar with ancient Hindu inscriptions, whose founding, erection, and durability puzzle archæologist and historian.

The ruined piles of Tughlukabad Fort and the evocative peacefulness of the Kotla Gardens are filled with the memory of the Tughlak dynasty, and the scattered fragments of monuments that make the Delhi golf links so unique and picturesque are all that remain of the Lodi city. Siri was the name of Khilji Delhi, but that city has now completely disappeared; only the gigantic base of a column intended to surpass the Qutb Minar tells of Khilji ambitions.

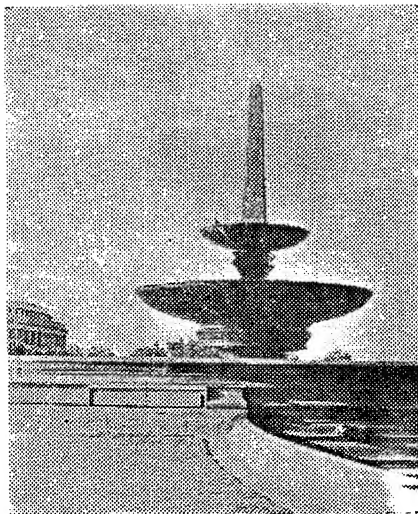
Delhi of the Mughals, the seventh Delhi, still survives with its palaces, mosques, tombs and gardens—tokens of the love of the Great Mughals for art and

architecture. Old Delhi still re-echos the magnificence of Mughal times when the Red Fort, in the days of its prime under Shah Jehan, shone with the splendour of the peacock throne and of the Light of the World, the Koh-i-nur; and when Chandni Chowkh was the fashionable road through which Emperor Aurangzeb repaired to the Great Mosque on his richly decorated elephant.

Chandni Chowkh is as busy as it has always been. Its congested bazaars are full of colourfully clothed people from everywhere. In the shops, *boutiques*, and on the pavements are exhibited all kinds of wares: soaps, beauty products, saris, sandals and shoes of infinite variety; medicines, drugs and chemicals; brass and metal ware, jewellery and ivory work; buttons, buckles, and belts, betel-leaves and boiled lentils; steel trunks and suitcases, and a hundred other articles of Indian and foreign manufacture. In the narrow streets, alleys, and by-lanes that run into Chandni Chowkh, many still practise the decorative crafts for which the city was once famed and throughout the day flow streams of incessant traffic of automobiles, tongas, and pedestrians. Motor horns and the clatter of horses' hoofs swell the noise of hawkers shouting their wares and of him who enumerates his marvellous cures for all and any disease. At intervals comes the screech of tram-car wheels and the clang-clang-clang of the bell as the driver, the Delhi wattman with nerves of steel, stamps the knob and, with wizard-like dexterity, conducts his over-crowded yellow vehicle through by-lanes, broad streets, and round the sharp turnings.



The red ramparts of the great Red Fort of Delhi within which the last emperor of the Mughal dynasty was captured on September 21, 1857. Bahadur Shah II was loved by his subjects for his sad verses ; he died at the age of 87, an exile in Rangoon.



The Obelisk that crowns the fountains in front of the Council Hall in New Delhi.

Rising above the motley, swarming scene of the Chowkh is the clock tower—the dovecote of whole flocks of fluttering pigeons—that chimes every passing hour. As the clamour-dazed people who tarried over-long at their shopping trace weary steps towards their homes, from overhead through some finely carved balcony may come a sound of revelry by night!

Far away from the bustle and noise of the old city is the new city—New Delhi that, at first sight, seems severe, erect, and austere. In its Secretariat and Council Hall, in its fountains, obelisks, vast lawns, and massive arched memorial, is a panorama that seems an architectural pot-pourri of Place de la Concorde, Cleopatra's Needle, Hyde Park Corner, and Piazza di Roma. In a voice different in tone to the ancient monuments or the din of Chandni Chowkh, the latest Delhi in red sandstone seems to say: I am the City Imperial.

Prettiest of all the reflections of buildings mirrored in the waters of the stone basins of the fountains is that of the Council Hall. What fervent speeches, what great argument has this round building known since it was built, for here it is that Council and Assembly meet to confer or opine in eloquent manner.

What with Asoka Road and Akbar Road, Tughlak Road and Jehangir Road, Windsor Place and Connaught Circus, Khilji Road and Hardinge Avenue, Kingsway and Queensway, Prithviraj Road and Parliament Street, the roads of New Delhi certainly pay their tribute to India's chequered history. It is Parliament Street that links the Council Hall to Connaught Circus and, prominent along this broad road, is the central organization of All India Radio—Broadcasting House. From

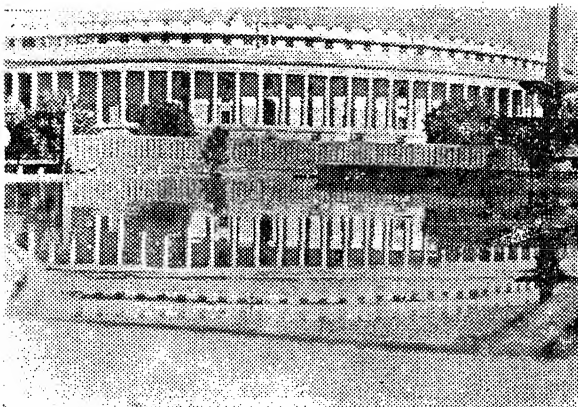
the sound-proof studios of this House equipped with microphones and marvellous modern apparatus, the broadcasts of Delhi originate.

Connaught Circus is more than just a circus—in plan it is really a number of concentric circles. The lawns are the inner circle, the arcades and surrounding buildings are in elevation the arcs of another circle, and the outer roads lie on the circumference of the largest circle. Evening in this centre of New Delhi presents a variegated scene. People lounge on the lawns, children romp about or listen to the band; and the arcades are full of people from every walk of life, from every part of India, and from other lands at their evening promenade or looking into shop windows where anything from a pin to the rarest curio is displayed. On the roads leading into the Circus crowds enter the picture houses.

At times this carefree and happy scene changes into a pandemonium. Of a February evening ominous clouds appear, the sky gets charged with electricity, thunder rends the air, and flashes of lighting reveal the dazzling white buildings of the Circus. A torrential rain pours, bringing with it utter darkness.

Or it happens on some afternoon in March that the wind goes wild. Thousands of gigantic propellers seem to be at work; a gale hurls clouds of dust as it goes. Some one cries *aandhi*!, and a hundred voices echo the cry; "Ah then and there is hurrying to and fro" as the people run away from the lawns towards the arcades, their homes, or some shelter. Soon everything is hazy and the wind shrieks along the streets; the tonga stand is empty and the dust storm enshrouds the Circus.





The Council Hall in New Delhi. The reflections in the stone tanks give a soft image and lend charm to the scene.



The Akalis, the bearded Sikhs in turban who must always carry spears in their hands, flock to fairs so dear to the heart of the Sikhs.

Such can be the whims of Nature even in this Imperial Capital.

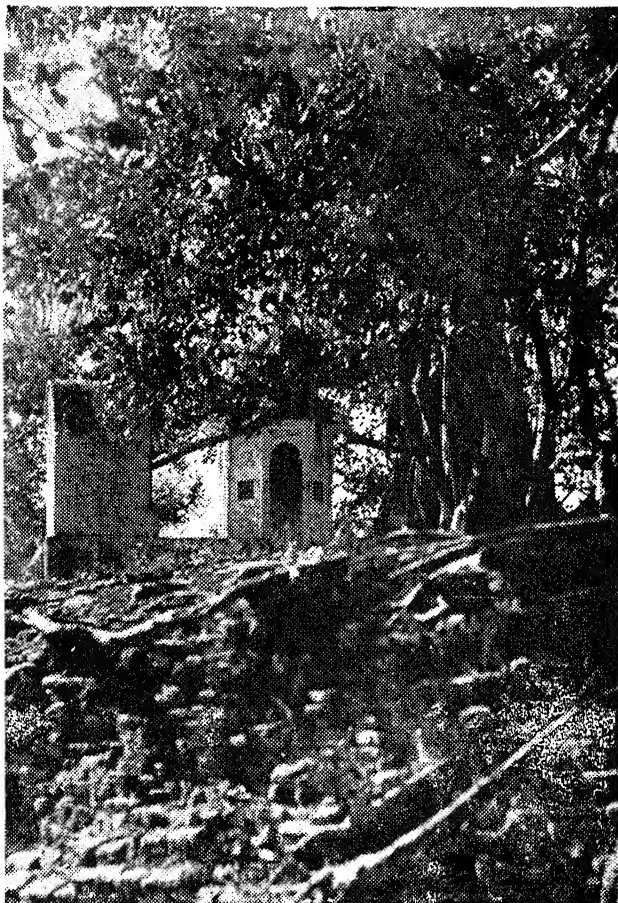
It is dawn. The traffic through the Ajmere Gate starts flowing towards New Delhi; the wheels of bullock carts roll, slowly and heavily, over the dust-covered road. The clatter of horses' hoofs awakes the tired clerk who sleeps in the verandah of his official quarters; the milkman bursts through the gate on his bicycle that was primarily designed to carry only himself, but actually carries also a multitude of milk pails. Another day has definitely dawned in Delhi; a hazy sun appears to rise above the row of buildings across the road.

The morning soon grows into day and the tide of traffic swells. Earlier, the labourers—men, women, and their children—had sung their way to work, and tourists had come from everywhere in tongas heavily loaded with suit-cases and hold-alls. The bright sun indicates half past ten as the tide of traffic still swells—tongas, ekkas, bicycles, buses, lorries, vans, clerks, head clerks, and gazetted officers all moving towards New Delhi. It is past eleven and the shrill whistle of the steam train tells of time, place, and distance—another train has come from somewhere in India all the way to Delhi. In New Delhi, a stream of cars runs up the broad road that divides the Imperial Secretariat into two blocks, North and South—the “upper four hundred” are coming to their administrative work.

Older than New Delhi and newer than Old Delhi is the quarter that lies beyond Kashmiri Gate. This part of Delhi was, not so long ago, what the new city is today. The avenues, parks, buildings and spacious bungalows in colonial style, and the hotels with “comfort

moderne" all go to make this end of Delhi quite a charming area. Some administrative offices are still housed in this "Middle Delhi" that is marked at one end by the Ridge through whose wooded slopes run riding paths. A road descends to the gateway of the University; here, before New Delhi had risen in red stone, the Viceroys of India resided; today, the youth of the Province strolls about the gardens or pursues its studies in the halls where once was the routine and splendour usually attendant on royal estate. An atmosphere of youthful hopes pervades the scene.

On the brow of the Ridge rises an Asokan pillar; spread out below is the magnificent prospect of living Delhi and of the ruined cities that flowered and withered on the banks of the Jumna.



A hundred miles north of Delhi lie the plains of the Great Battle of the Hindu Epic, the *Mahabharat War*. Here Krishna's chariot stood, and here he preached the Song of Philosophy, the *Bhagavat Gita*, so tradition avers.

## An Epic Battle Field

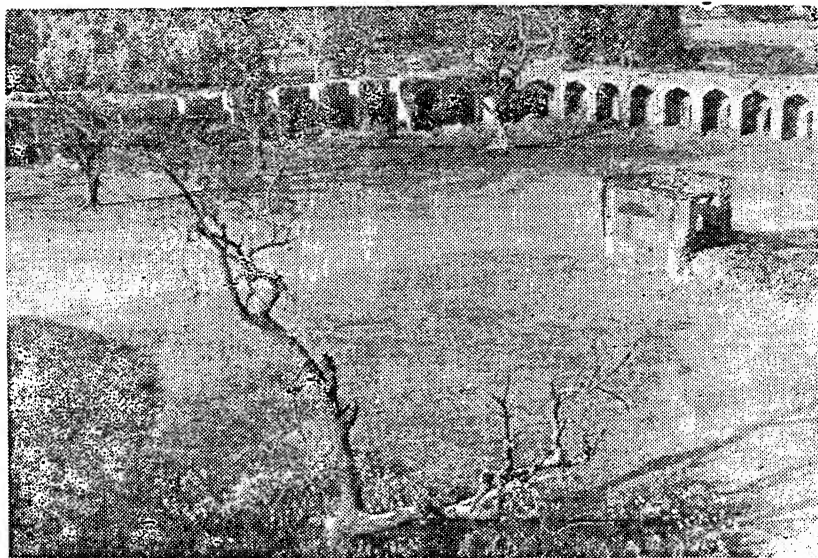
THE road that links Delhi to Lahore is more than three hundred miles long. Just off the hundredth milestone lie the plains of Kurukshetra. The setting sun bathes the plain in red, then disappears behind the horizon. Black shadows to either side add loneliness to the scene, while shapely silhouettes against the pale indigo sky reveal the presence of temple towers. A few yards from the brick embankment of an ancient tank, the waters are lost to sight in the mist—mists of the night and of time.

Gita Bhuvan was built for those who wish to spend their days in thought and meditation, who wish to read the *Song Celestial* in the surroundings where it was first composed; Gita Bhuvan is for the simple of taste who are content to draw their water from the well, cook their food in the open air, wash their clothes in the early morning sunlight, and sleep the sleep of the mentally contented under the stars, or within the white-washed walls of a bare and airy room. Gita Bhuvan has a library in which are found all the translations of the Gita that were ever made in over a dozen languages.

It is true there is nothing much to see in Kurukshetra, but there is much to feel. The temples, though some of them are in ruins, are not of ancient date; the great tank alone has claims to some antiquity. Memories of Mughal times are found in the vast *sarai*, now used for housing cattle, and in the massive

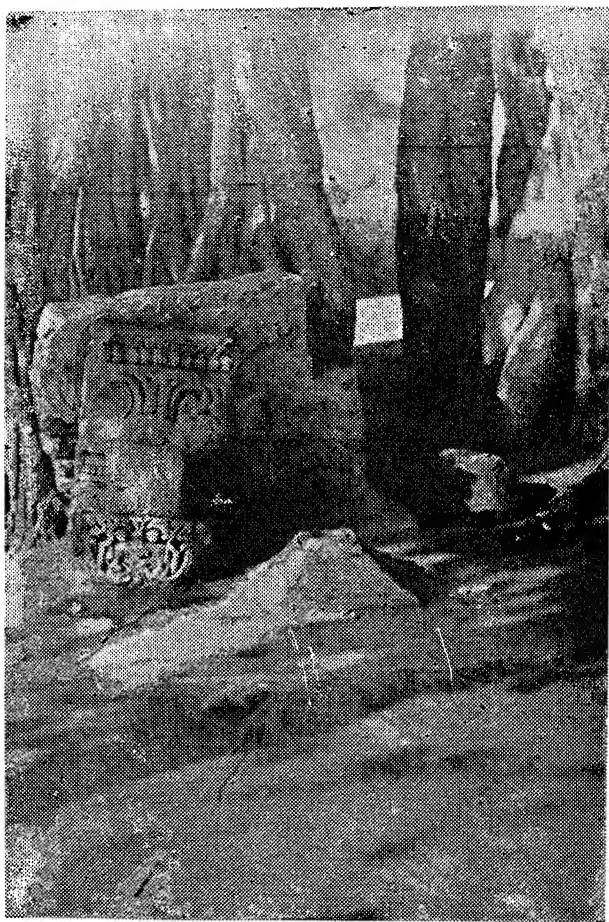
fort whose well-planned keeps and courtyards and countless rows of rooms suggest that it was built for residence as much as for defence. The fort is now a school for little children who clatter up the steep, narrow stone stairways to reach their class-rooms over whose doorways stand out in brutal incongruity the legends : "He who laughs last laughs best", "A stitch in time saves nine", "Britannia rules the waves", and other white chalk inscriptions in Roman script. This fort of Kurukshetra also has its tales of Akbar and Jehangir, of generals who tried to defy imperial majesty, of sieges and victories. From the top-most terrace adorned with tiny Mughal kiosks, the wide panorama of the countryside shows here, the huddle of the little village, there the tall spires of a Siva temple and, yonder, the rounded dome of Gita Bhuvan rising from its nest of greenery.

To his hand, says the recluse of Kurukshetra, were mustered the forces of the Pandavas ; and to that, those of the Kurus. To this hand is the gentle slope of a knoll and, to that, a grassy stretch ; nearby is the little shrine under a banyan tree that commemorates the spot where Krishna's chariot stood, and where Lord Vishnu left the imprint of his feet. The epic battleground whereon the code of morality and honour, of truthfulness and right living, of honesty and righteousness (of dharma) was at stake, is now a grazing ground for sheep. Where spears flashed in combat, steel shears glint in the sun ; whence rose the clangour of battle cries now swells the irritatingly plaintive bleat of the newly - shorn. Herdsmen in great, tangled turbans and weathered blankets follow their rustic trade where once the Pandavas fought the Kurus.



The vast surai of Kurukshetra, the epic battlefield. This rest-house was built in Mughal times.





Close view of the shrine where Krishna left the imprint of his feet,

Sitting on the brick embankment of the ancient tank shaded by age-old trees, there is much to feel in Kurukshetra. In the midday silence a porpoise becomes bold enough to lift his horny snout above the water and slide noiselessly between reeds and lotus leaves to pick a discriminating lunch from the surface of the water; a deep-mauve splash of colour from a tree in bloom that overhangs a little island temple, stands out against dark-green mango trees and dark red walls; somewhere a pilgrim chants and a rhythmic stanza of the Immortal Song floats softly on the stilled air:

Never born, never dead;

Independent of the past, the present, or the  
future;

Unborn, eternal, everlasting;

More ancient than the ancient;

The soul is immortal though the body succumb  
to death.

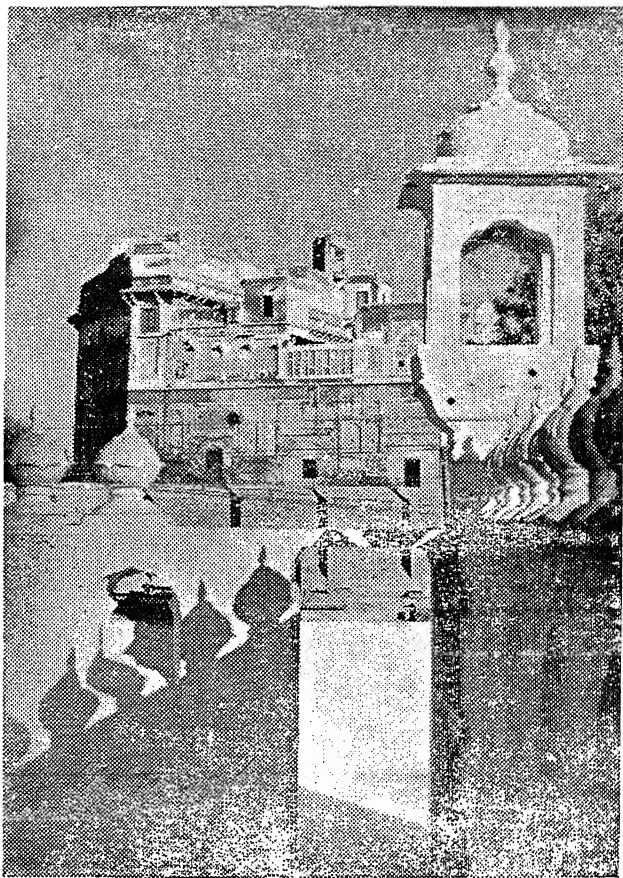
This is a world saturated with peace, a world of enchantment.

## Lahaur

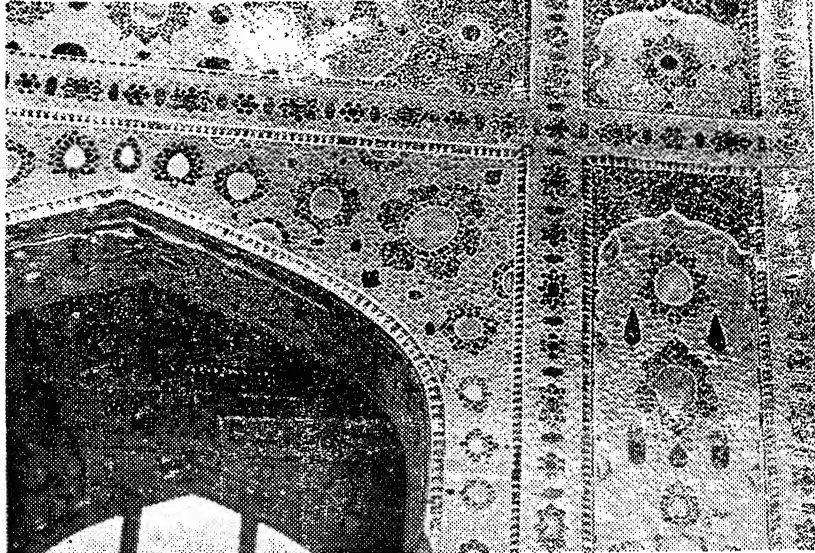
§ SECOND to Delhi alone is the capital of the land of the Five Rivers, Lahore. It was for many hundred years the centre from which revolts were started; it saw the crowning of kings and the splendour of imperial courts, the ravages of hordes from North and Central Asia, and the rise and establishment of a fierce military religious sect. Lahore traditionally dates back to Lahaur of Hindu epic times, but history first records its name about the first century after Christ. With its treasure of Mughal architecture, its wonderful monuments—landmarks of a stormy and fascinating history; with its tales of great men and beautiful women, of fierce soldiers and polished courtiers, of distress and prosperity, Lahore is engrossing.

Whether in the famous fort and palaces, mausoleums or gardens, the crowded bazaars, or the shrines and imposing mosques, the city of Lahore and its suburbs are a synthesis of the history and development of a whole region. In this city, a dozen times sacked and as many rebuilt, architectural styles varying from the severely utilitarian to the highly refined art of a powerful and decadent court, from the austere religious to the unimaginative structures of warriors, are of absorbing interest.

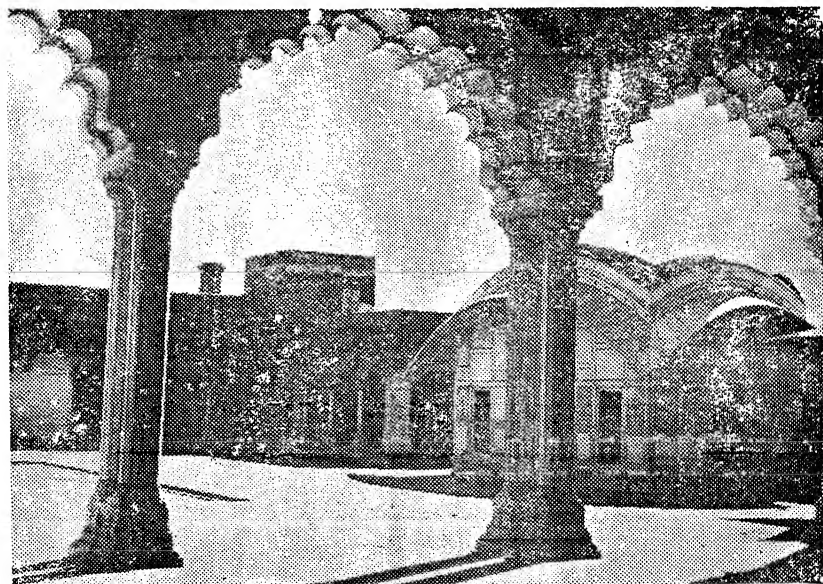
Lahore attained its two most powerful periods under the Great Mughals and under the Sikh Lion, Maharaja Ranjit Singh. One could well bracket together Akbar the mason of Mughal unity and of the Mughal



A view of the Fort of Lahore. It was built by Akbar on the site of the old citadel. Ranjit Singh, later, rebuilt portions of this historical fort.



A view of glittering mosaic inside the Naulakha pavilion.



Inside the Fort of Lahore is the Naulakha Pavilion—so named because its construction costs nine lakhs—built by Emperor Shah

empire, and Ranjit Singh, welder of Sikh unity and strength, and founder of the short-lived Sikh kingdom. The former occupied the town, fortified it by building the present fort on the site of an earlier citadel, and by surrounding it with massive walls; while the Sikh, having conquered most of the Punjab, made Lahore his capital, restored Akbar's fort and rebuilt the city walls over those of the Mughal. Two constructions that are the oldest and the newest monuments of history preceding the annexation of the Punjab by the British.

The Golden Age of Lahore belongs to the age of the Mughals. While Akbar and Ranjit Singh built forts for their protection, two other emperors built them for beauty and pleasure. The palace called "The Sleeping Place", with its perfect proportions, fine inlay work, and careful planning against the intense dry heat of Punjab summers, is demonstrative of Jehangir's love of art and comfort. Shah Jehan's lovely Naulakha Palace—so named because it is said to have cost nine "lakhs" of rupees to build—with inlays in semi-precious stones and gems to represent the flowers of his charming gardens and the birds that sported there, is significant of the lavishness of this emperor. To this same emperor posterity owes the Mirror Palace entirely decorated with a mosaic of tiny mirrors, the Shish Mahal that was used by Ranjit Singh as his hall of audience.

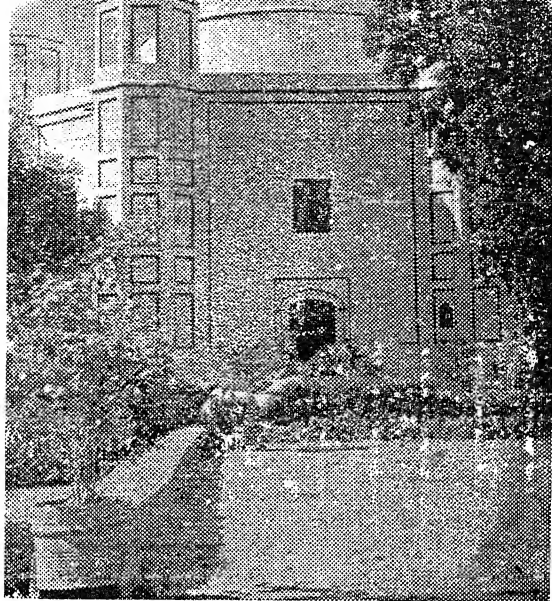
In white marble of straight and sober lines, strangely chaste compared to the ornate style of the period, the tomb of Anarkali is another landmark of Lahore. Prince Salim, as the story goes, dared to exchange a smile in his father's court with his father's favourite. Akbar, catching sight of this smile, ordered

Anarkali to be cast from his harem and to be buried alive. Many years later, Jehangir caused to be inscribed on the tomb he built for her, the words: "Ah! could I behold the face of my beloved once more, I would give thanks to God until the day of resurrection." Jehangir must have been a sentimentalist, for he was, probably, not as love-lorn as the inscription suggests; his queen, Nur Jehan, ruled by his side, both well-loved and a power in the Mughal empire for many long years.

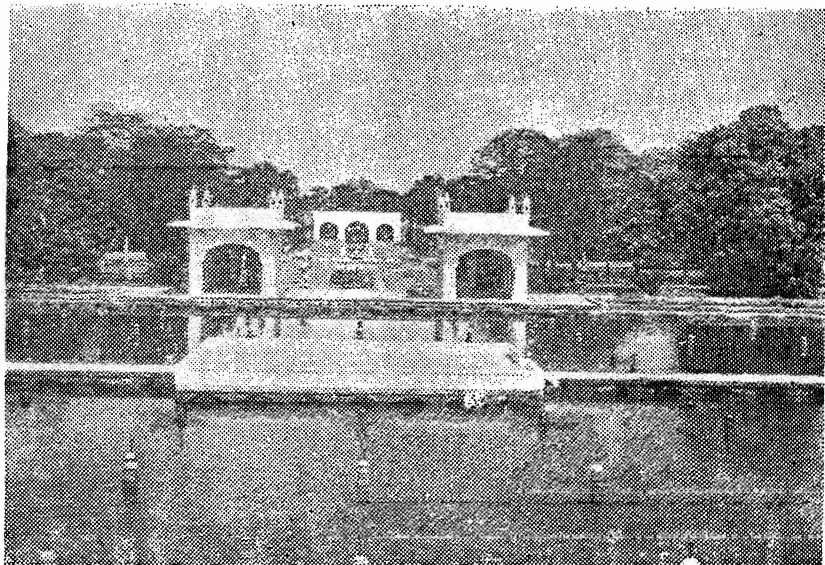
Nur Jehan planned a garden for her own use, at some distance from the fort of Lahore. Heart's Delight (Dilkhush) she called it. Jehangir, in 1627, was laid to rest in this very garden in the beautiful mausoleum of Shahdara.

Some miles from this city lie the famous gardens of Shalimar, laid out by the order of Shah Jehan and created by his celebrated engineer, Ali Mardan, in the seventeenth century. The Shalimar of Lahore is a copy of the gardens of the same name built by Jehangir, in far away Kashmir.

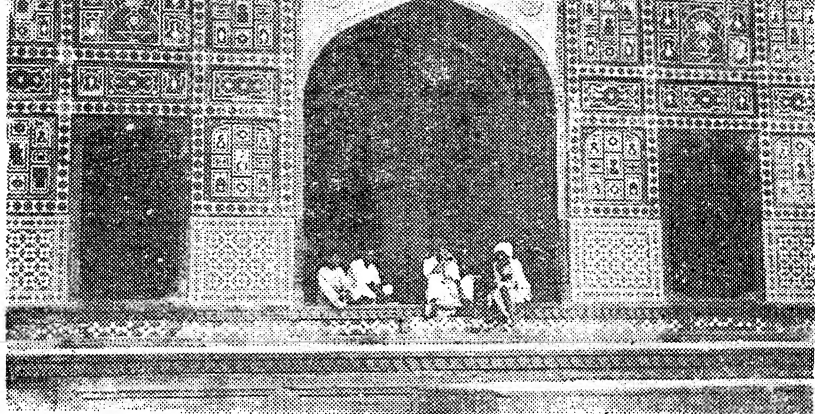
In different vein to the city of former times is the Lahore which has grown in the last century into an elegant city. The Lower and Upper Mall runs like an artery through this modern capital. Distinctive from the monuments of Mughal times or Sikh history are the buildings that lie near or to either side of the Mall: the Punjab University, the Museum, the Chief Courts, banking and business houses of local, Indian, or foreign origin; the imposing building of the Legislative Assembly, the extensive grounds of Government House and Lahore's Lawrence Gardens; *Salons de beaute*, newspaper offices, and book-sellers and newsagents purveying journals from every part of the globe.



In memory of Anarkali, an enchanting young danseuse from Persia, Jehangir caused this monument to be built ; for, as the tale goes, he had loved Anarkali.







The arched entrance to the tomb of Jehangir in Shahdara, outside Lahore. Jehangir had this mausoleum planned and built in the environs of his capital during his life time. Today, the gardens around the mausoleum are open to the public.



the Lower Mall of Lahore stand the buildings of the Punjab University that was founded in the seventies of the 19th century.

On some evenings, promenade time on the Mall is an instance of life in the capital. Street traffic is diverse, from the horse-drawn tonga and tum-tum, or the noisy bus, to the most luxurious automobile. The restaurants and coffee-houses attract a numerous clientele of plebeian and aristocrat; along the sidewalks stroll the people. Women are dressed in choice saris and elegant footwear *to match* or in the *Punjabi* tunic and pyjama—*kurta* and *salwar*—and the graceful thin veil. The menfolk are in varied attire. There is the Sikh, faithful to his turban, but immaculately dressed in western clothes; cadets and officers in their khaki, gabardine, or Air Force Grey uniforms; some wear the long coat and *choodidar* pyjama—the pyjama somewhat like breeches—with gay turbans or sober headgear; others come in clothes of *khaddar* and a cap of homespun cloth, the Gandhi Cap.

The city of busy bazaars and lofty houses, the Mall and fashionable quarters, the pretty houses of Model Town Extension, the Cantonement where British and British Indian troops are stationed—the old and the new, it is all there. With the changing times Lahore has spread her boundaries and possesses many characteristics that come by tradition and others by adoption—monuments, manners and customs—all a strange blend of the Orient and the Occident. Mixed feelings does this Lahore stir, gay and sad, but one feeling is uppermost: would that this sunny picture of the capital were without its shadows. Shadows that grimly tell of poverty, of the starved and the semi-starved, of the needy or debt-ridden, of those many who, both to honour and fame unknown, eke out a mere existence.

# The Wrinkled Image of Lost Cities

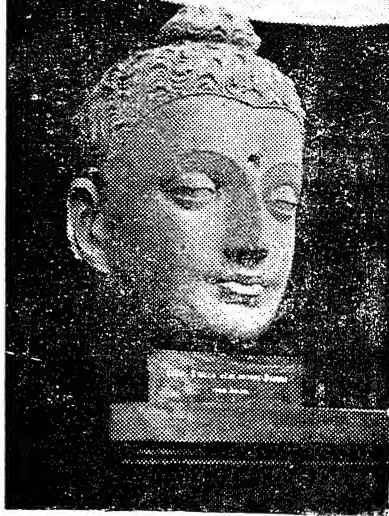
A ruin—yet what ruin! from its mass  
Walls, palaces, half-cities have been rear'd

BYRON

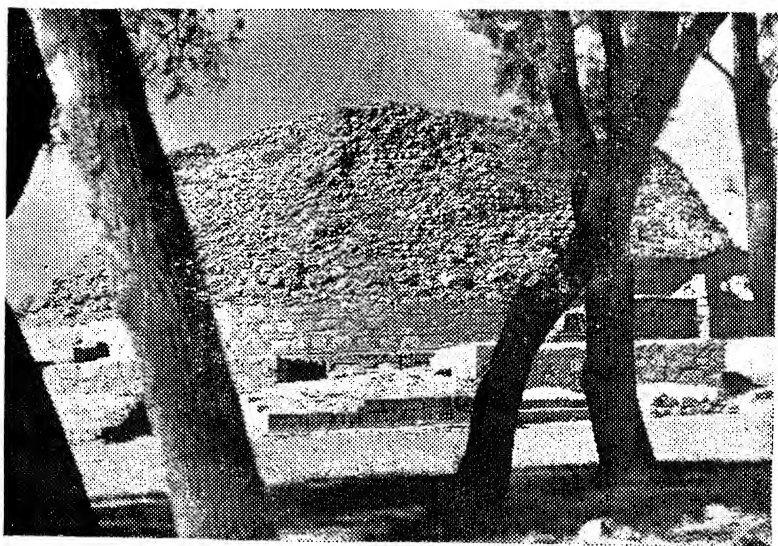
“IT is one of the tragedies of history”, writes Aldous Huxley when discussing the mediæval tale of *Barlaam and Josaphat*, “that Christendom should never have known anything of Buddhism” save a garbled version of Gautama’s life. “But alas! as far as the West was concerned the Enlightened One was destined, until very recent times, to remain no more than the hero of an edifying fairy tale”.

It is sad, too, perhaps, that the Enlightened One was destined to have a greater following in other lands than in the country of his birth and ministry. From the great bulk of Buddhist scriptural literature, stories and legends; out of the number of glowing accounts left by Buddhist monks who came from far-off lands; in the monuments and sculptures found everywhere in India; and through the relics unearthed from some buried cities, the mind can draw a picture of the days when the Buddha’s doctrines and precepts bloomed in his own country. Those were the times when Taxila was a living city though it is a tomb of kingdoms, today.

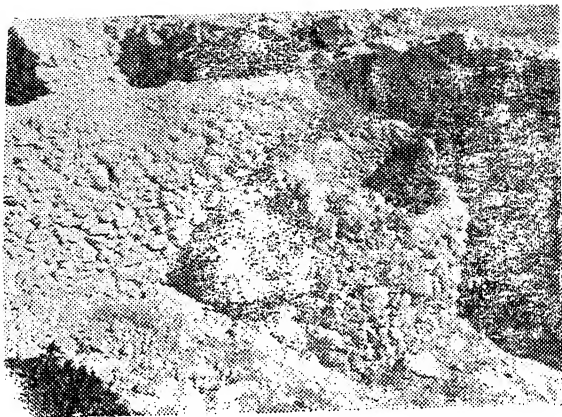
Taxila was the first city which Asoka the Great, who ranks amongst the powerful emperors of Indian history, governed as a prince. As an emperor he adopted Buddhism and, under his enlightened patronage,



A priceless treasure preserved in the Museum of Taxila.



Stupas like this were generally erected by Buddhists to enshrine some relics of the Buddha. The emperor Asoka, the Great adopted Buddhism. He was fond of Taxila where he had governed as a Prince. This great stupa—the Dharmarajika Stupa—was built in his time. It is one of the most remarkable and outstanding monuments of Taxila.



A soak-well; one of the extremely interesting discoveries of Taxila. This shows how drainage was managed in private houses in those ancient times. These wells contained many a valuable relic.



In the ruins of monasteries of Taxila's lost cities are the mutilated images; from them can be traced the development and blossoming of Buddhist art.

Taxila grew in beauty and celebrity. Asoka must have recognized the importance of this city, for here he sent his son as viceroy.

In the innumerable relics discovered in the mounds of Taxila, and from the monasteries that once filled the Haro Valley with life, can be traced the development and blossoming of Buddhist art. From the dignified simplicity of early Buddhist artistic expression to the masterpieces of sculpture and decoration, Taxila displays the whole story of a religious inspiration translated into visible form. Taxila, however, was not only a centre of Buddhism. Long ages before the birth of Gautama the Buddha, the city figures in Sanskrit literature as a famed university and a prosperous centre of international trade.

In fact, Taxila is a number of ancient cities on three separate sites. Bhir Mound, the earliest site, in its successive layers of ruins, descloses the remains of several cities—some of them believed to go back to the seventh century before the Christian era. Rich in relics of the sojourn of Alexander the Macedonian in Northern India is one of these cities. It was to Bhir Mound that his missionaries came when Asoka made Buddhism the State religion. The little that remains of the cities of Bhir Mound show the haphazard design of streets and houses in those ancient times.

The second site of Taxila, Sirkap, offers an amazingly symmetrical ground-plan, with its Main Street that runs wide and straight due north and south, bisecting the city; its side streets meeting the main at right angles, and its vast palace with well defined sections. In The numerous finds of utensils, implements of

everyday life, coins, ornaments, and toys, the massive city walls and gateway—all these demonstrate what a fine city was this Sikrap of Taxila.

The temple of *Jandial*, believed to be for Zoroastrian worship, and a double-headed eagle—an emblem that appears to have been known in Asia, Europe, and India—are evidences of the foreign influences in Taxila that was a centre of trade which linked Asia and India.

Of the third site, Sirsukh, even less remains than of Bhir Mound; only sufficient has been found to designate it as the capital of the last powerful dynasty to reign in Taxila—a capital destined to destruction at the hands of the White Huns in the fifth century. To Sirsukh must have come the first of the many Chinese pilgrims who have left a record of their journeys into Buddha-land. Two centuries after its annihilation, the pilgrim-scholar, Yuan-chwang, found only a few dilapidated monasteries and some *stupas* where miracles still took place.

The heyday of Sirsukh was probably, too, the heyday of the magnificent monasteries, now in ruins, in which the Haro Valley is so fascinatingly rich. From the dry, bare heights of the Hathial Hills, the monks in the monasteries of *Mohra Moradu* and *Jaulian* perhaps watched with sublime detachment the worldly activities of the city in the valley below; with mystical contentment they must have gone back to meditation in the well-built cells, or to their precious manuscripts, or to the completion of some stone representation of the Buddha. Some of these images, now mutilated, still sit and seem to meditate.

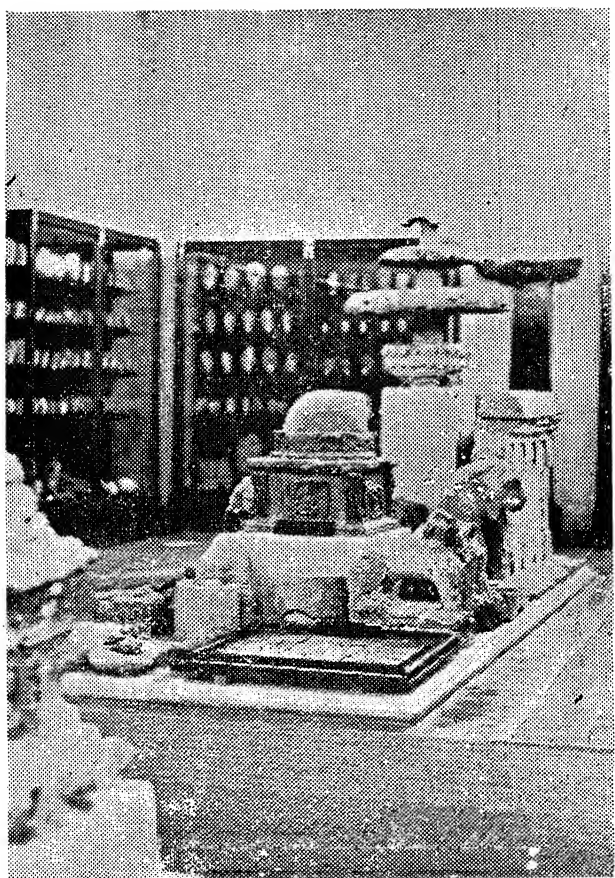


The temple of Jandial was probably a temple for Zoroastrian worship. It is a unique monument just outside the city of Sirkap in Taxila.



Children of Taxila today.





Inside the very well arranged and fascinating Museum of Taxila.

The utter calm that reigns over the uncovered ruins of Taxial's cities and monasteries, the simple and admirable repose instinct even in the mutilated sculptures, seem to reflect the peace and renunciation of the Buddha. They are eloquent of the transience of this world and of the spiritual comfort attained by Right Thinking, Right Living, and Right Knowledge.

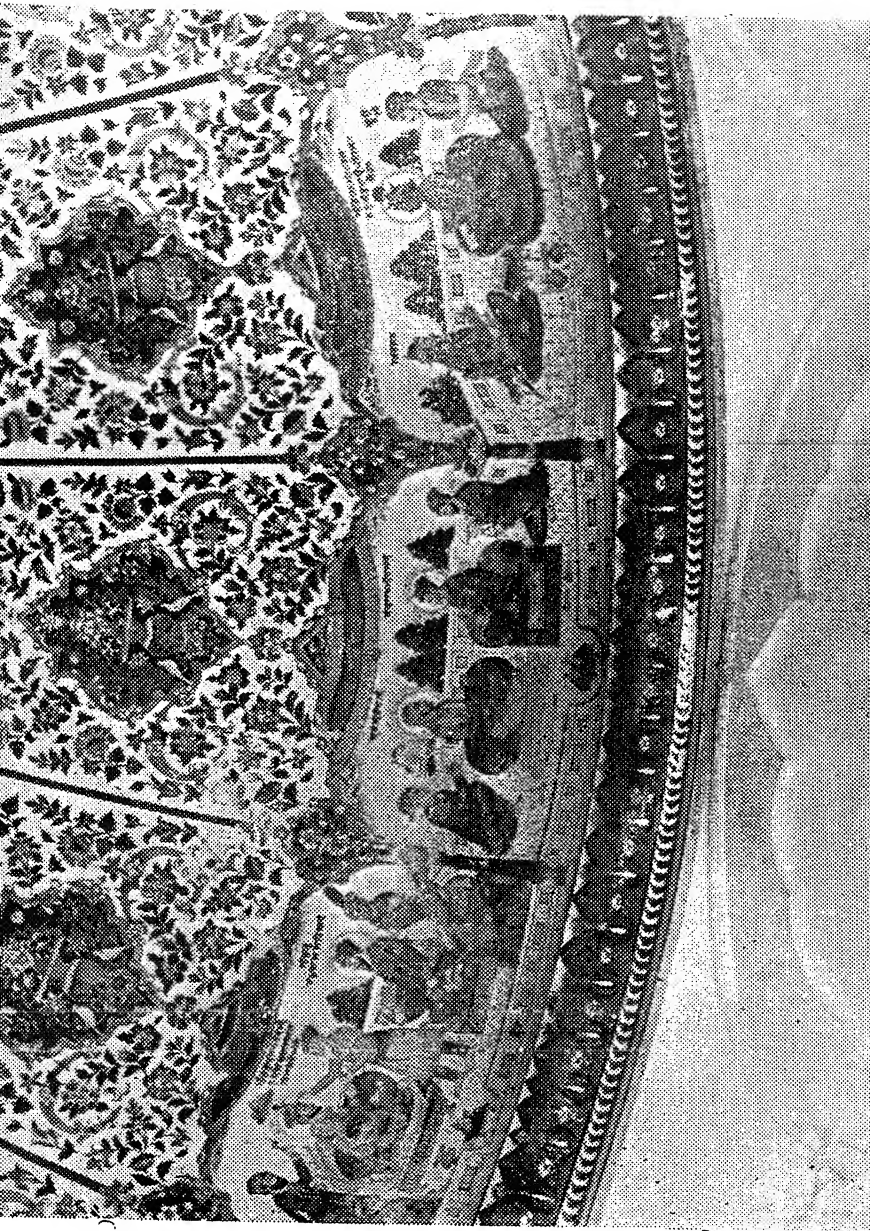
Like a beacon that throws much light on the past of these ruins, on the summit of a hill not far from Bhir Mound stands a modern building. Its walls guard the priceless treasures that are a tribute to the men who fashioned them, and to the men who discovered them, archaeologists. From the lawns of this Museum spreads the panorama of the Hathial Hills and the Haro river, the valley with its mounds and ruined cities. The prospect below bears that very peaceful expression so characteristic of the images of the Buddha that had lain buried since Taxila fell and faded out.

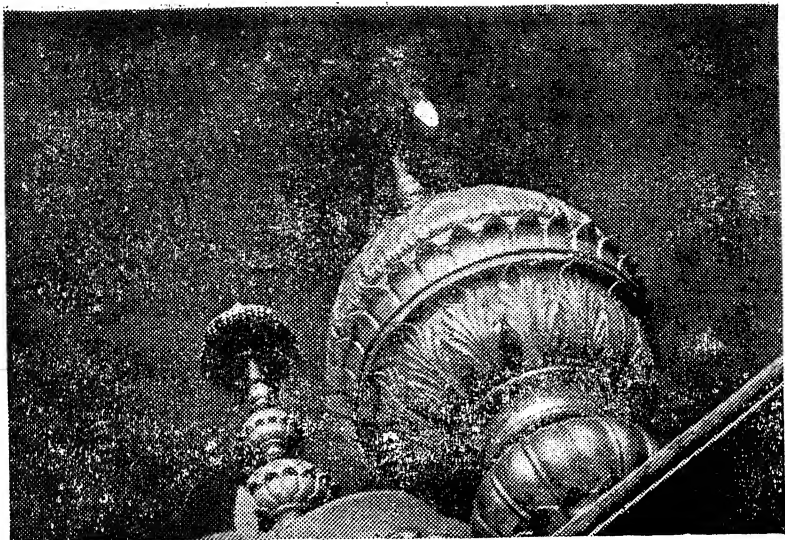
# The Temple of the Gilded Dome

THE iris of the eye contracts as the gaze goes up to the gilded dome that, shimmering and glistening, reflects in myriad images the summer sun of the Punjab. The golden temple of Tarn-Taran is reflected in all its beauty by the waters of its sacred tank; the liquid image of the phantom dome is real, soft, and lovely, and the iris of the eye opens as it takes in its beauty. Graceful trees overhang the margin of the tank whose waters are said to restore health to lepers; any corner under the shade of the trees on the steps of the tank is a quiet spot, quiet except on days when the fairs, so dear to the heart of the Sikh, take place.

It is true, perhaps, that Tarn-Taran with its temple surpassingly beautiful both in architecture and setting is not so far famed as the Golden Temple of Amritsar; this, perhaps, because it lies off the beaten track. Religion and relief to the poor are the main concern of the inhabitants whose ancestors welcomed the great Ranjit Singh, the Lion of the Punjab, to this temple. The Sikh Lion came here because he revered it as much as the Golden Temple of Amritsar. He gave it its gilded dome and caused the walls and ceilings to be beautifully decorated.

In Jehangir's reign, it was at Tarn-Taran that Prince Khusru sought shelter with Guru Arjun. The Guru gave asylum to the Prince and a gift of money. Later, when Khusru was captured, the Guru received the supreme penalty at the hands of the Emperor. To





Four like this decorate the base on which rests the gilded dome.



In these chariot-like vehicles, to say nothing of tongas, tum-tums, and autobuses, come whole families of Sikhs to their religious fairs.

ru Arjun Tarn-Taran owes its sacred tank that, varied images, mirrors the beauty of its famous shrine.

As the eye gazes on the reflections, the mind goes back to the founder of Sikhism, the first and greatest guru, Baba Nanak. "India in the fifteenth century and succeeding centuries", writes Daljit Singh in his *GURU NANAK*, "had experienced the march of invading armies, ruthless beyond description, massacring men without mercy in the name of religion, and plundering earth and home without distinction." Guru Nanak, according to this same writer, himself said of his times; the age is like a drawn sword; the Kings are robbers.

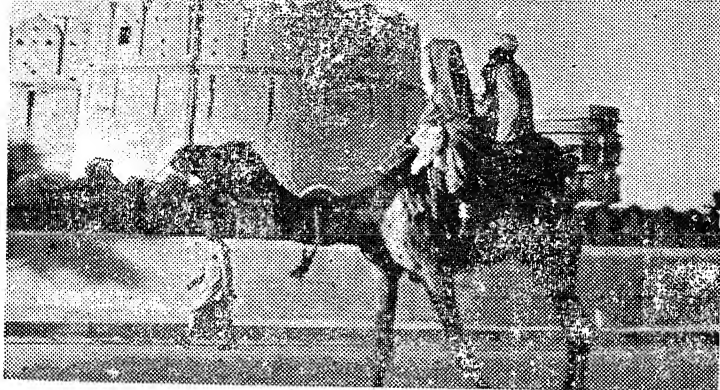
The faithful that come to Tarn-Taran, remove their baggage and wash their feet in the tank before entering the temple, are evidence of the wide-spread reverence accorded to the teachings of Guru Nanak. In troublous and evil times he established his simple faith and pure doctrine—Sikhism that illustrates that "The ages of iron have been the ages of faith".

## Rajput Realms

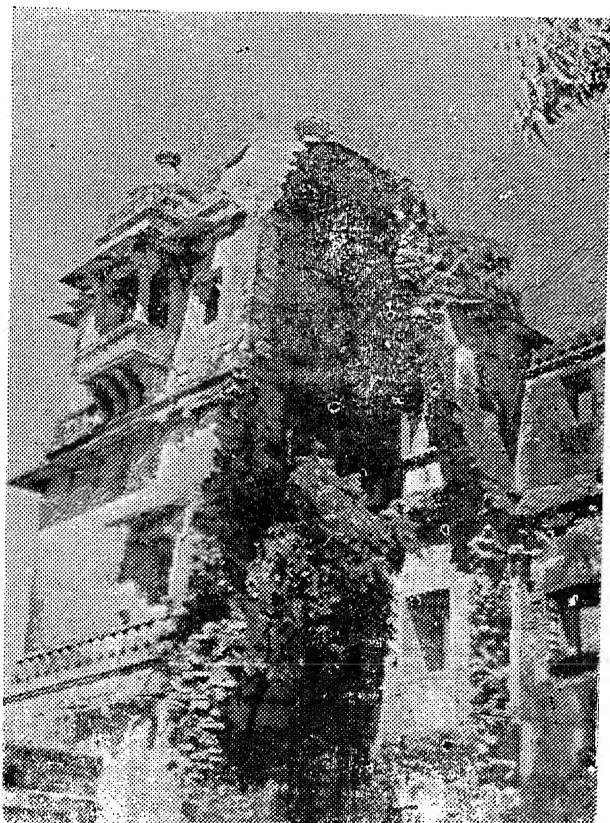
“And if the following day they chanced to find  
A new repast, or an untasted sping  
Will bless their stars, and think it luxury!”

IN the merciless glare of the desert sun that creates many a mirage, the camel with resignation and patience carries its burden—the Rajput with his turban, the wife in her bright costume, and the children. This is a part of India where the many colours of flowers and the green of foliage are seldom seen. Little wonder, then, that the women of Rajaputana choose brightly coloured costumes and glittering jewellery. As the sun travels across the heavens, the changing light paints the landscapes with varied hues, and even a barren land becomes beautiful. Nature in her myraid moods and the brightly clothed women make of Rajput realms a land of colour—colour that always attracts the human eye.

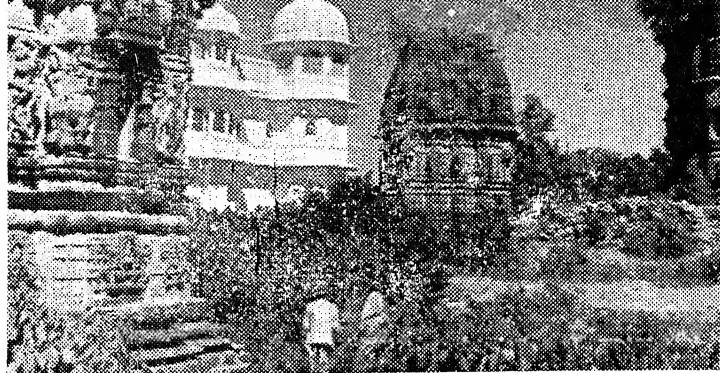
The traveller in Rajputana sees much that belongs to the plateau of Algeria, and particularly the feature common to all deserts, the camel—the ship of the desert, as he is called, but really the king of the desert. The Thar, geographically, occupies a large portion in the regions of Rajputana; it is not all white sands, perhaps, like the greater deserts, but barren land; barren in vegetation, yet fertile in history and warriors. At one time the chief capital of this romantic land was Chitorgarh, but it is today a deserted city-fort.



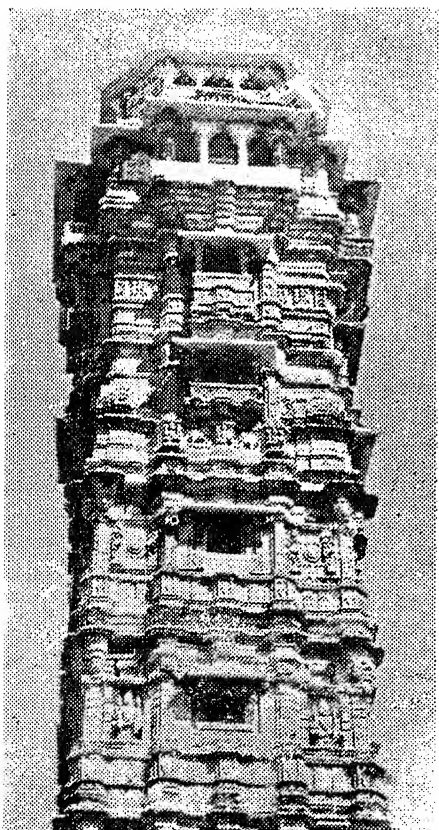
As in the desert, so even in the city, the camel is a means of transport.







Among the ruins is a modern palace that belongs to the ruler of Mewar, the Maharana of Udaipur.



The Tower of Victory was built in the days when Chittorgarh was a living city and Rana Kumbha ruled. On each one of the storeys of the tower are inscribed texts and images pertaining to religion; and, as Islam forbids representation by images, only the one word Allah, is inscribed on the story dedicated to the religion of the Prophet.

Narcissus, says the Greck legend, became enamoured of his own reflection in the water and, unable to possess himself of the shadow, died of grief. According to the lore of Rajputana, Allah-ud-din Khilji, Sultan of Delhi, on seeing her reflection in a mirror, fell in love with the peerlessly beautiful Padmini, a Chohan princess and the wife of the Regent of Chitor. Infatuated with her beauty, Allah-ud-din invested the fort of Chitorgarh and demanded the hand of fair Padmini as his price for raising the siege. But the Chohan princess, loyal wife and true to her Rajput tradition, preferred to perish in the flames, while her husband fell fighting on the field of battle. Two tragedies in legend and lore, it seems, can be claimed by a mere reflection; but, in its grim, bloody and ruthless sequel, the Hindu tale far out-beats its legendary Greek parallel.

The tales of Rajputana tell of the lighting of the sacrificial pyre, of the warriors of Chitor watching their womenfolk, headed by Padmini, marching fearlessly into the flames, and how "the Rana ordered the gates of Chitor to be thrown open and, calling his clans around him, descended to the plains, where he, and every man with him hurled himself against the foe, and slew until he himself was slain." When the Sultan entered Chitorgarh, writes a historian, he found nothing but a silent and deserted town over which still hung a cloud of foetid smoke arising from the vaults where all that he had coveted lay smouldering. In his rage he destroyed the whole city, sparing only the palace of Padmini.

In the reign of Udai Singh, the last of his line to rule in Chitorgarh, the last and deadliest siege took place; it was "the most famous and dramatic military

operation of Akbar's reign". It was the end of Chitorgarh.

Udai Singh founded Udaipur, the city to which the Rajput chiefs came when they abandoned Chitorgarh. It is, today, the premier capital of Rajputana; a city of beautiful lakes and stately buildings and palaces, whose rulers claim direct descent from the sun himself.

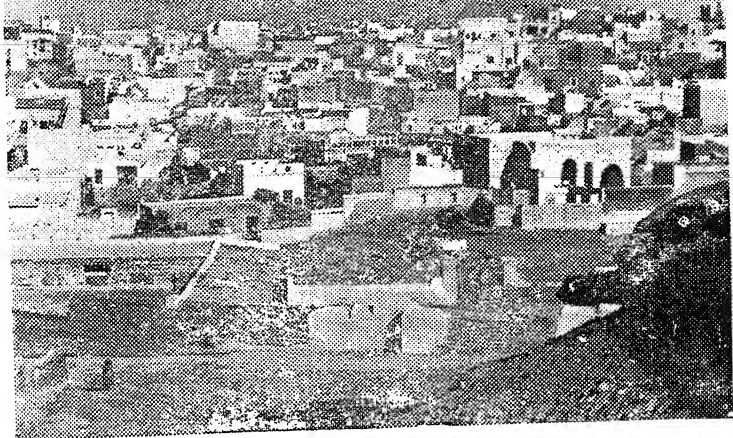
From Jaipur to Jaisalmer, from Udaipur to Bikanir, arteries of steel, the railways, run across this desert of India, linking historical capitals; while the airport of Jodhpur links Rajputana to the capitals of lands outside India.

The mile-long caravan leaves in its wake a whirl of dust; the people of Bikanir—Rajputs and Muslims—are returning from the yearly fair of Nala. Homeward they come in bullock carts, on horseback, on camels, and in camel carts; neither the dust, the sand, nor the heat affects them, for they are children of the desert.

Bikanir is one of the important States of Rajputana, its capital was founded, long ago, by Rao Bikaji. In the old city fort hang the relics and panoplies that recall historical battles, and the insignia presented by the Mughals emperors to the Rajas of Bikanir in recognition of their chivalry. Filigree windows and stone fretwork over the walls lend charm to the solid architecture of this ancient palace, now no longer inhabited. Today, there are many palaces in Bikanir, with screens of scented roots over the windows that keep the desert heat from reaching the Rajas, and with apartments furnished in European style—even the style of Louis XIV is not foreign to the places of Bikanir. None the less, the old Fort with its memories of heroism and trophies of war,



The city of beautiful lakes and palaces, and present-day capital of Mewar—Udaipur.



Homes in the desert ; a view of Bikanir city.



Detail of Rajput  
mural sculptures  
on the walls of  
a temple in  
Chitorgarh.

filled with romance. There hangs the sword, huge and heavy, that Rao Bikaji wielded with his powerful arm—Bikaji, the builder of Bikanir.

Camels, people, oxen and cows, elephants and horses, they are all there in the market-place; the desert folk are busy in their city. The purple heath and the ravan are no longer in the focus of the eye, instead it is the picturesque market-place filled with people in colourful costumes, and narrow streets designed to keep away the torrid sun.

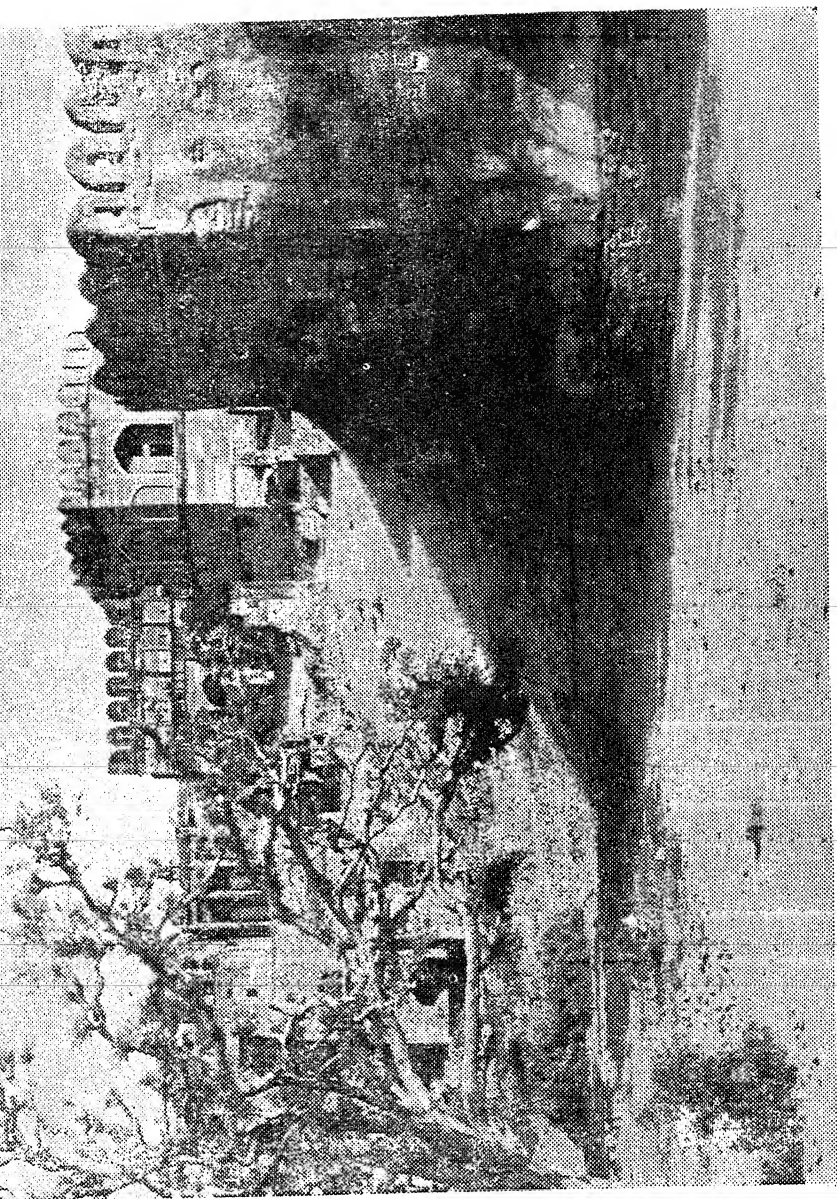
Be it in a street scene or in the market-place, be it the cities of palaces and forbidding forts or in the desert waste, colour is ever present as in the many images of a kaleidoscope; colour that brightens life and landscapes in Rajput realms.

## The Capitals of Akbar

WHEN Babur won the Battle of Bayana, he probably never imagined that Akbar, his grandson, would rule a great empire only a few miles from his field of victory. Though the Sultans had chosen Delhi, Akbar chose Agra as his first capital; Fatehpur Sikri as his second, and Agra again as his last. It was in Agra that Akbar's grandson was to build the world renowned Taj Mahal.

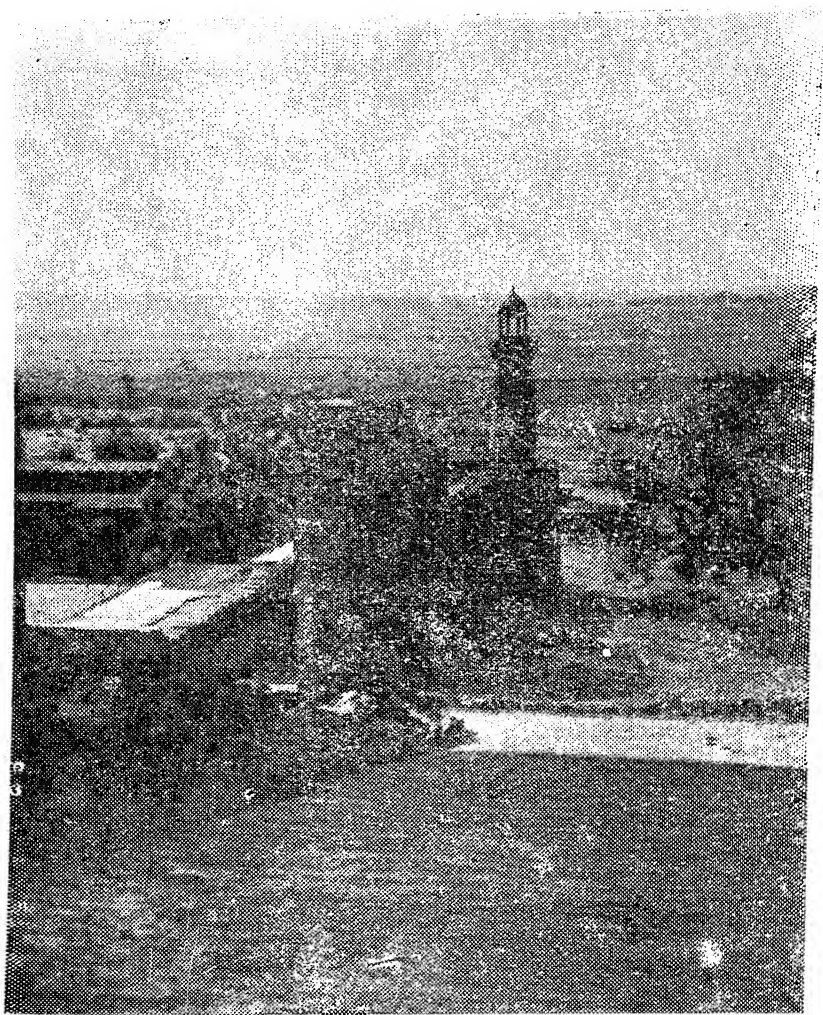
Akbar, for very religious reasons, transferred his seat of government from his first capital, Agra, to Fatehpur Sikri, twenty-six miles away. He had long yearned for a son, and the Saint of Sikri forecast the birth of Salim, to be known later as the emperor Jehangir. Sikri, therefore, became significant, and Akbar built there a capital in red sand-stone. "Here, we might say, stood Troy", wrote Jerome Xavier, a leader of the third Jesuit Mission, as he passed through this capital of Akbar.

Fatehpur means "City of Victory"; so to Sikri, Akbar added Fatehpur. The immense gateway to the mosque of Fatehpur Sikri was erected to commemorate Akbar's conquest of Gujarat. Only pictures can convey the lavishness and luxury, the solidity and design with which Akbar the Great planned Fatehpur Sikri that, in its time, was the centre of the eastern world. But alas! Sikri lacked water and so, at last, Akbar abandoned the capital built to his own plan. He left ostensibly, for a campaign in Kabul, but he was never to return to

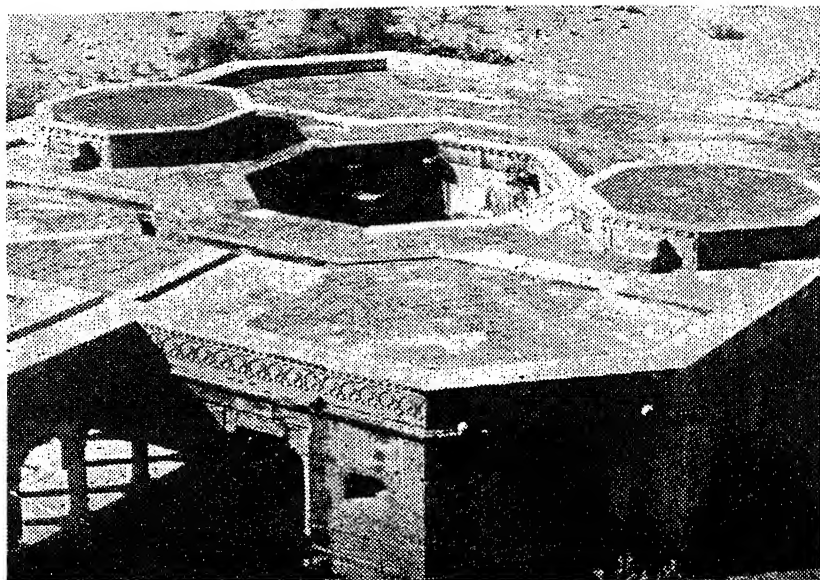


... m ... n ... f ... / ... restorer of Silri which led to the elephant stables. On either side of the





Ruins of the elephant stables. The Deer Tower and landscape around Fatehpur Sikri.



Octagonal well in Fatehpur Sikri which formed part of the fine water-supply system of the city.

the City of Victory that even now, deserted, speaks of the great emperor who could plan magnificent edifices, just as well as he could control the mightiest of beasts, the elephant.

From the imposing red fort of Akbar's last capital, Agra, his grandson, Shah Jehan, gazed across the hot, dry plains to the marble mausoleum that he had built to the memory of the Mumtaz that he loved. A broken disappointed emperor, a prisoner of his ownson, Aurangzeb, in the very fort from which he had ruled his vast domains, Shah Jehan bowed his aged forehead towards the west—towards Mecca—to the red sunsets that heralded his end and heralded, too, the sunset of the Mughal Empire.

Exquisite as it is now, so it was when the sad emperor gazed upon the beauty of the marble beneath which, in eternal peace, rested the one he had loved so much, The Ornament of the Palace, Mumtaz Muhal. By a Persian poet was the dirge so poignantly suited to the soliloquies of Shah Jehan: "It was at this fountain that she drank, she is dead but the fountain flows on; it was of this honey that she tasted, she is dead but the honey is still sweet; on this rose her head she sank, she is dead but the rose tree grows on; my heart she had taken in her hands, she is dead and my heart in her tomb lies."

In Agra, the one-time capital of Akbar, Mumtaz and Shah Jehan lie side by side in this fairest of tombs, the marble Taj.

## The Garden of Sanskrit Legend

**T**WANDERING in the cities of India requires a certain flexibility of mind. One city may be purely of the living present; another, of the historical present; and yet another may belong to the epic past and, at the same time, be a city of our India. Chitorgrah, Delhi, and Agra belong both to the historical present and the present; Muttra, Brindhavan, and Gokul belong to the epic ages and to the present. Between Delhi and Agra lie these three towns, and the Jumna that flows alongside the Tajmahal, flows from Delhi through Muttra towards Agra.

“In the days when the gods came to the earth in human form”, as a Brahmin priest would tell you, Krishna was born in Muttra. His childhood he spent in Gokul, and a hundred happy days of boyhood in Brindhavan. The Song of the Cowherd—the *Gita Govinda*—narrates the lyrical life of Krishna; of the milkmaids who danced to his flute, and of the miracles he performed. In Krishna’s childhood days, Brindhavan was a garden of forests, today it is a town of temples.

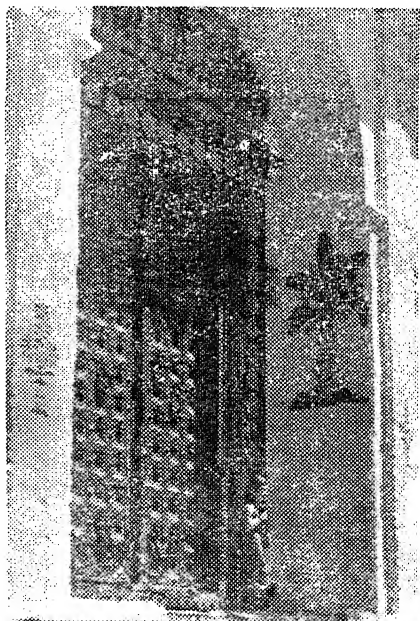
The three towns of Muttra, Brindhavan, and Gokul attract thousands of devotees from all parts of India, for here is the land where Krishna stole butter, grazed his cows, killed demons and played his flute for the entertainment of his playmates, the Gopikas.

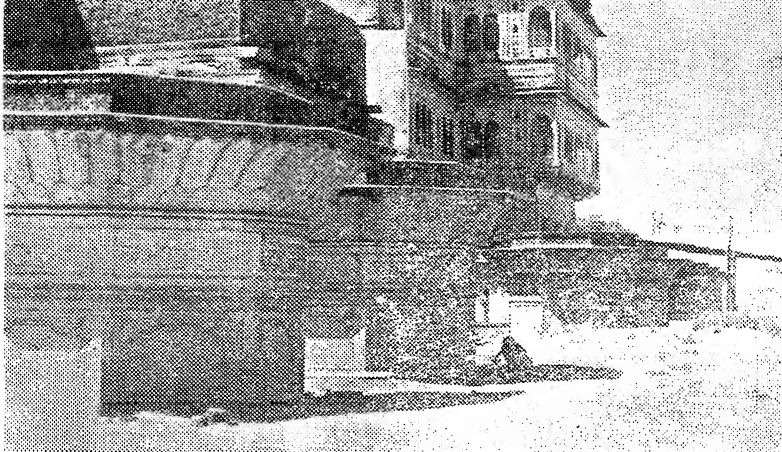
Where Krishna sported on its banks, to the Hindus the river Jumna is especially holy and sacred. Of the



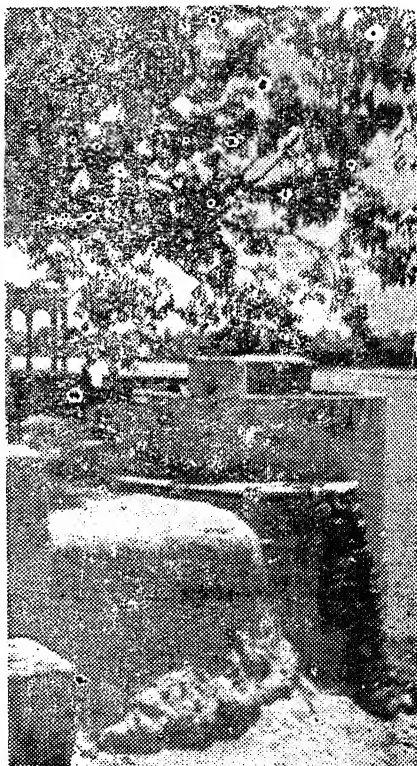
In the city of Muttra long, long ago, Krishna, incarnation of Vishnu, was born to the sister of the then tyrant king Kamsa. Since epic times Muttra and the neighbouring towns of Brindhaban, Gokul, and Govardhan have been held as sacred cities. To this temple of Muttra come all the devotees and followers of Krishna.

A doorway to a shrine in Gokul. An oracle had warned the tyrant king, Kamsa, that he would die at the hands of his sister's eighth son, and so when Krishna was born he was miraculously transferred across the river Jumna from Muttra to Gokul and brought up as the son of a cowherd. He was later to fulfil the prophecy of the oracle and slay the tyrant Kamsa. Picturesque Gokul brings to the mind many other legends of the boyhood of Krishna.





The palace of Jodhbai in Brindhavan on the banks of Jumna. It was in the Jumna, near Brindhavan, runs the tale, that Krishna killed the mighty serpent, Kalinga.



The river banks of the Jumna at Gokul where pilgrims bathe, for not only are the waters of the Jumna sacred, but here, where it passes Gokul, long ages ago, the divine Krishna spent his boyhood days and performed many miracles.

child and his roving Jayadeva sings in his Song of the Cowherd :

“The firmament is obscured by clouds ; the woodlands are black with Tamala-trees ; that youth, who roves in the forest, will be fearful in the gloom of night : go, my daughter ; bring the wanderer home to my rustic mansion ”,

said the cowherd, Nanda, to the milkmaid.

This youth who roved in the forests of Brindhavan was one day to speak on an epic battlefield and deliver his masterly message, the Song of Philosophy, the *Bhagavat Gita*.

And so to Muttra, the birthplace of Krishna, unto Gokul, his nursery, and towards Brindavan and Govardhan, the playground of the growing lad that was god incarnate, the devoted pilgrim turns his steps.

# The City of the Gifted Poet

“What though to northern climes thy journey lay,  
Consent to track a shortly devious way;  
To fair Ujjaini's palaces and pride,  
And beauteous daughters, turn awhile aside;  
Those glancing eyes, those lighting looks unseen,  
Dark are thy days, and thou in vain hast been.

*Megha Duta*, or Cloud Messenger,

By Kalidasa,

(Trans. H. H. Wilson.)

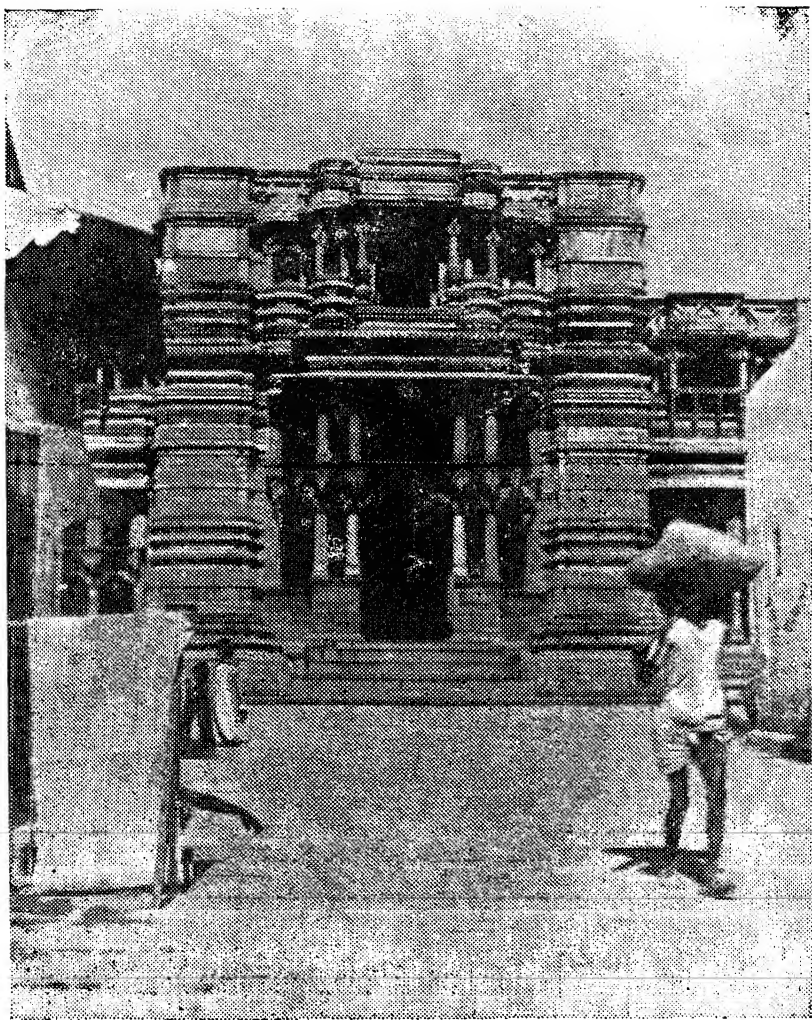
Just below the tropic of Cancer, at longitude 75°50', on the banks of the Sipra river lies the city of Ujjain, today a part of the State of Gwalior. The history of Ujjain, like that of most of the cities of India, presents a chequered pattern on which are contrasted times of power and prosperity with times of sack and destruction; but, unlike many another important place that has vanished or faded away into insignificance, Ujjain still stands where the Sipra flows—a busy town of Central India.

The Golden Age of India that coincides with the Gupta Empire saw an amazing development of Sanskrit literature; during this also flourished the sciences and the arts, painting and sculpture and architecture, and it was at the court of Ujjain that lived and wrote the greatest of Hindu poets and dramatists of ancient India, Kalidasa. Although the exact place of Kalidasa's





Here, in Ujjaini tradition goes, is where Kalidasa was granted the boom of poetry by the Goddess Kali. His masterpieces are enough to make Ujjain live for ever.



A temple in Brindhavan, a township of temples. It is the paradise of Hindu legend, the playground of the lad Krishna.

birth—somewhere in the neighbourhood of Ujjain—is not known, it is nevertheless generally believed that he spent most of his life on the banks of the Sipra where, as a boy praying in the temple of Kali, so the story goes, the goddess granted him in a flash the gift of letters and song. How the mortal thus favoured honoured his Donor is seen in his classic works of drama and poetry in language yet to be surpassed. Some verses of his *Cloud Messenger* sing of Ujjain, verses that reveal the poet's fondness for this city.

From the thirteenth century onwards for many hundred years, Ujjain knew but intermittant peace, for not a wave of raiders came but did not destroy idols and burn temples and carry away the city's wealth. The treasures of the Golden Age and of far more ancient times fell to the hands either of looters or bigots, so that in the Ujjain of today little, if anything remains of the beauties for which it was renowned.

With the passing centuries Ujjain ceased to rebuild its temples, in their stead factories have been erected. Motor roads and railway tracks lead to this centre and carry away goods manufactured in the mills, and the produce of the Malwa plateau. Large public buildings, uneasy in their surroundings, contrast strangely with the huddled old-fashioned houses along the narrow streets. A few pilgrims still wander about and find their way to the Sipra ghats, the brass-worker is busy with his metal, the cloth-merchant on his snow-white bolster is engrossed in his customer, and in the market-place the peasants tender their produce to the townsfolk.

Something of the historical town, however, still remains. In a very ancient and famous temple is

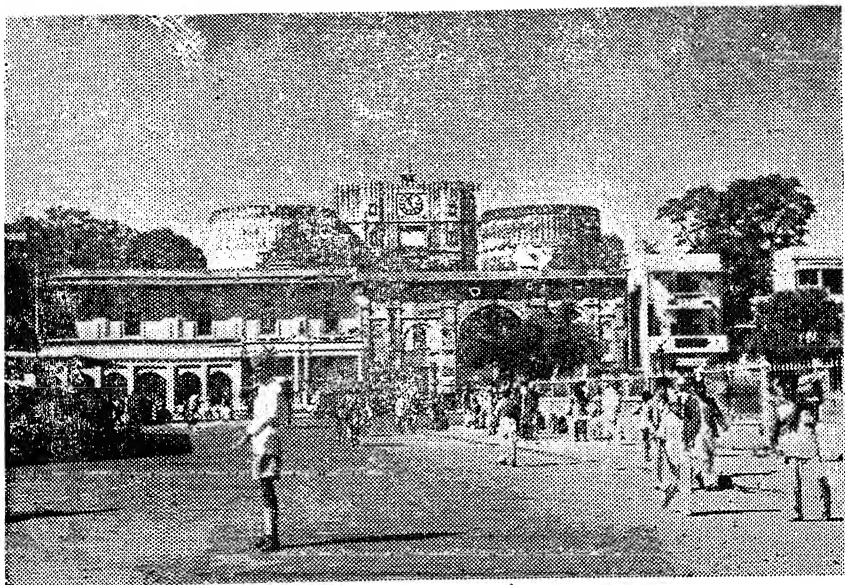
enshrined an idol of Shiva endowed with special sanctity; grey and weather-beaten, this temple is jealously guarded by priests and disciples. On the ghats along the quietly flowing river, daily life is refreshingly blended with religion. Outside the town, at the end of a sandy track, the temple where Kalidasa is said to have received his gift from the Goddess of Knowledge slumbers peacefully on the edge of open fields.

Away to the left is the palace of Ujjain with its pretty garden overlooking the river, and its artistically arranged tanks and fountains. Across the town, once more towards the open fields, is the observatory constructed by the order of Raja Jay Singh of Jaypur in the eighteenth century; the wierd geometrical shapes of the masonry instruments are accurately graded and marked for astronomers' calculations. Already the ancient Hindus reckoned their longitude from the meridian of Ujjain.

The setting sun casts fantastic shadows across the observatory buildings, soon the Polar Star will be seen at the end of the narrow slanting wall, two hundred years old and still accurate. Over the town chimneys smoke where temple towers were once silhouetted against the evening skies, and factory hooters sound at the time that temple bells were wont to call the people to evening worship; a strident band rends the air announcing the latest screen-hit of Ujjain's cinema—twilight descends across the Malwa plateau.



minarets of mosques, temple towers, domes of palaces: they are there in the Ujjain of today.



The Fort of Ahmedabad. Sultan Ahmed Shah, first Sultan of Gujarat, commanded the construction of this fort on the site where stood the citadel of Asawal.

# Gujarat

SOUTH of the Malwa plains, to the west of the Vindhya range, stretching from the foot of the Aravalli hills to the Arabian Sea, to the Rann of Cutch and to the Gulf of Cambay, lie the rich lands of Gujarat saturated with history.

It was to the far end of these regions that the Ghaznavid ventured, a millenium ago, from his capital in Ghazni; he sacked the temple of Somnath, famed for its riches and much revered in the West of India; he broke the gigantic idol and returned through the desert of Sind immensely the more wealthy for his spoils which included the fragments of Somnath's idol. Like Mahmud of Ghazni, others came, too, in the succeeding centuries to Anhilwara, land of the Gujaratis—a terrain of wealthy cities and temples that is, even today, rich in its districts of Ahmadabad, Broach, Surat, Baroda, Kathiawad, and Bombay.

Four centuries after the incursion of the Ghazni and the Somnath raid, Ahmad Shah the First, Sultan of Gujarat, transferred his capital from Anhilwara Patan to the banks of the Sabarmati where stood the town of Asawal. He liked the air and climate of these regions, and a new city was built to his command—Ahmadabad came into being.

The growth of Ahmadabad was dynamic and, within a few decades of its founding, it became renowned as the chief city of Gujarat. The artisans of the land who were skilled in Hindu and Jain styles of architecture, assimi-

lated with little difficulty the Mohamedan ; in fact, as a scholar puts it : “ The local craftsmen, during a century of experiment, grew very expert in harmonizing the tra-beated style of the Hindus and Jains with the arcuated style of the Mohamedans.” Splendid specimens of such work does Ahmadabad display in its historical fort, its great gateways, its mosques and many monuments with their exquisite stone lace-work. Numerous other arts and crafts flourished, too, and an eye-witness has written that the prodigious quantity of gold and silver cloth and flowered silks made in Ahmadabad were much in demand in all the courts of the Mughal empire.

To-day, an infinite number of looms and labourers fashion from just raw cotton the fine fabrics of pretty designs that emerge daily from the many mills of the city ; but the story of Ahmadabad itself is a fabric fashioned by time, that took some centuries for men and magnates—Sultans and statesmen, architects and craftsmen, artisans and industrialists—to weave into its texture the pattern of a busy and interesting capital that is, as some one aptly called it, the Megapolis of Gujarat.

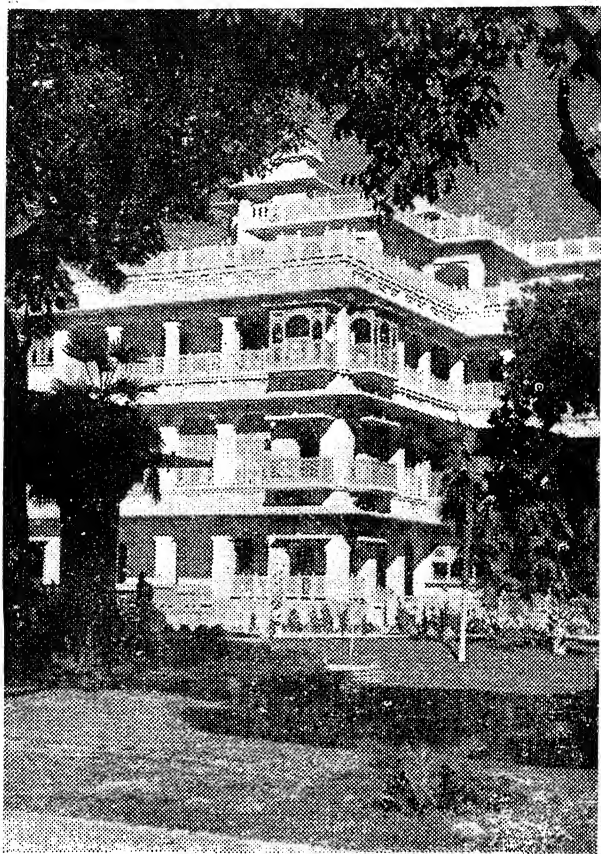
Across the river is the Sabarmati Ashram from where Gandhiji began his historical Salt March that adds yet another page in history of the city that Ahmad built.

A time there was ere Ahmadabad was built when trading ships from the Malabar and Coromandel coasts ; Arab dhows from Mecca, Basrah, and Persia ; many ships from Manilla, Malacca, and the Maldives, and vessels from China and ports of the Far East called at Swally, the port of Surat at the estuary of the Tapti.





It is on the banks of the river Sabarmati that stood the ancient town of Asawal, where stands to-day "The Megapolis of Gujarat," the city that Ahmad built.



A private mansion of a mill magnate in Shahi-bagh, the wealthy residential quarter of present day Ahmedabad.

Those were the days when Surat was important, wealthy and populous, and a western gateway to India.

Long before Surat rose to such power, Broach was the proud city of the western coast. When Cambay was the island empire of the Arabian Sea, Broach was a metropolis. "City of Cities" which saw the mariners of Nearchus' fleet; the sons of Rome "when Rome was"; men of the ages of the Pharaohs; and the early Indian travellers from Arabia. Full of classic associations for the student and of proud memories for the merchant; over which has expired the strength of Jaina, Muslim and Brahmanical power!" Such is Briggs' apostrophe to Broach in his work "The Cities of Gujarastra".

Much more so than Surat, Broach is but a shadow of its former self; it continues to be a well inhabited town and an entrepot of a high grade cotton that grows in the agricultural neighbourhood—the reputed "Broaches" of the Cotton Exchanges.

A distant view of the city from across the river Nerbadda presents a beautiful picture that stands out against the skies like a bas-relief, while the flowing waters of the river balance the composition and enhance the pictorial effect of the entire scene.

Surat, however, retains its importance as a centre of trade and activity, and sends many of its raw and finished products to Bombay, unenvious, it seems, of Bombay's maritime greatness that, some centuries ago, was its own monopoly. But like many a city, Broach and Surat seem to take with dignity and resignation, so characteristic of age and wisdom, the vagaries of fortune. How strange a parallel to the lives of men!

As an important station lying on the railroad that runs from Bombay to Baroda, Ahmadabad, and Delhi, Surat is fortunate in its situation; its neighbouring regions are fertile, and there is no dearth of commercial activity, for many Parsees and Gujaratis inhabit the town—both communities that can claim keen and astute business acumen.

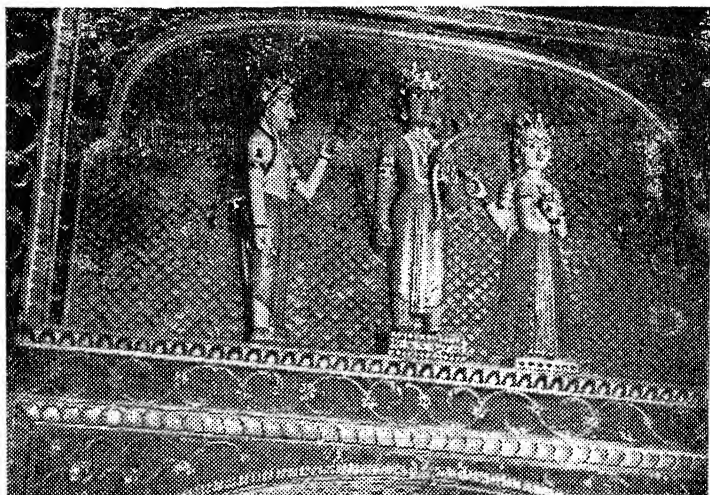
The past is a permanent asset to Surat. The bastion walls along the Tapti river are relics of times when raids from ruling hordes were not uncommon. The sites of the early European *comptoirs* and of the first English Company in India tell of the years when English, French, Dutch, and Portuguese vied with one another for trade supremacy in this country. Of the past, of the dead, of significant and fateful events, the few monuments of Surat remain, as it were, in memoriam.

The river itself carries the mind back to times when river boats laden with wares sailed to its estuary and Surat merchants boarded ships from foreign lands to buy or barter with traders from beyond the seas. Up the Tapti with cargo for Surat, or downstream with precious cargo for export, upstream and downstream went the traffic, not unlike the traffic streams in the congested streets or crowded bazaars of the Surat of our century.

Present-day Surat teems with life, the streets are full of people, tongas, buses, and luxurious cars. Only the busy river scenes are missing; neither the shipwrights who built out of Indian timber their durable boats and ships, nor the river-craft plying to and fro can any more be seen; they belong to the history of



The sturdy peasant-women of Gujarat do not shirk doing a man's job,



Painted plaster work of Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana over a doorway of the palace of the Old Fort of Bikanir.

Surat, or perhaps to its future—only the waters of the Tapti river flow, as ever, unto Swally, into the sea.

When European factors were rivalling one another in Surat, in the days when the British Raj in India was in its embryo state as a Company of traders, not far from Surat was a well-known weaving centre. Since then, within twenty decades, it was destined to become the capital of an Indian State and the seat of the ruling house of Gaekwars.

A fairly large city, well populated, Baroda has its palaces, parks, public buildings, administrative offices, business houses, industries and bazaars. Some houses in the city are strikingly representative of the architecture of the regions; while some areas are dotted with bungalows in colonial style, and some areas are quiet and clean, others can be said to be congested and stuffy.

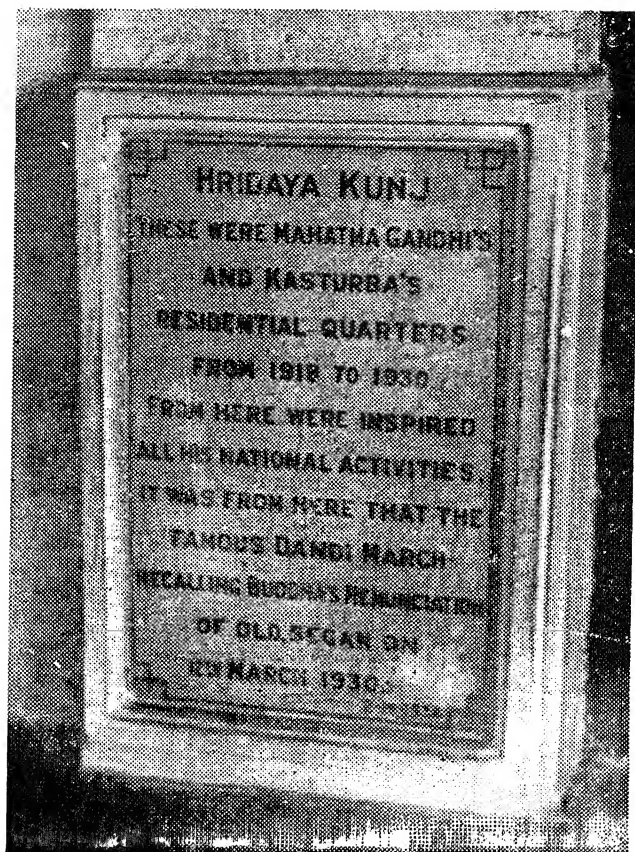
The palace and its vast lawns are maintained in princely fashion; the summer palace of Makarpura could, in its interior decoration and its well-kept gardens, be aptly called a *chateau*. On occasions Baroda can present the picture of regal splendour with durbars, kaleidoscopic processions, spectacular sports, gaily decorated streets and brightly illuminated buildings—at such times Baroda is eloquent representation of pomp and glamour, or of “the splendour that was Ind”, have it the way you like. On such occasions the mind realizes the wealth of this State of Gujarat that, in its domains, includes the ancient city of Krishna, Dwaraka of hallowed memory to the Hindus.

In the villages of Gujarat is a very good picture of peasant life; every home has its spinning wheel, and cottage industries are much in favour. The simple

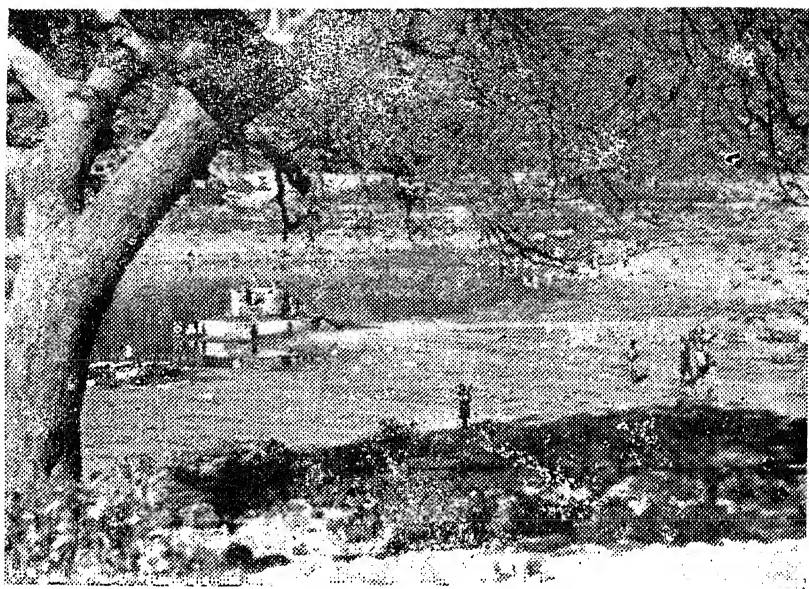
village folk are thrifty and hardworking; and, unless famine spreads its grim shadows, the large round metal trays, the *thalis*, on which food is served and eaten are seldom without enough even for the uninvited guest. Be it towards the eastern borders near Baroda, or in the regions of the Girnar Range and the western States of Kathiawad, the traditional dance of Gujarat, the *garba*, performed by groups of girls and women in flowered saris is an ever popular expression of the happier side of their lives. Though most of life is rural, there are times when whole crowds come from everywhere and the scene, as it were, is a sea of Gandhi Caps. Mute and reverent, thousands listen to their leader preaching on the philosophy of the *charka*, the significance of non-violence, the advantages of abolishing untouchability, or on the greatness of the Gita. These and many other traits give the villages of Gujarat, east or west, a remarkable family resemblance.

Such, in short, is the story of Gujarat gleaned from written history; but the story would be incomplete both for the historian of today and tomorrow were it not remembered that Gujarat is the land of Gandhiji's birth—a fact that gives Gujarat historical immortality.





On the banks of the Sabarmati is also the Sabarmati Ashram. This commemorative plaque in the ashram tells of great lives and great events.



A scene typical of the Telugu districts. At the village well, the club of the villager, where much gossip is exchanged.

# The Delta of the Krishna River

THE Andhras, whose modern representatives, the Telugu people, still occupy the region between the Godavari and the Krishna, on the east coast of India, are mentioned very early in Indian literature", reads the Cambridge History of India. It is History that links the Andhras with Gujarat; Andhra inscriptions and coins have been found in eastern Malwa and in Gujarat.

The fertile lands that lie between the rivers Godavari and Krishna present yet another picture of India. A cross-section of the people, twenty million and more, who inhabit the Andhra regions reveals lawyers and officials in government service; zamindars and opulent land-lords possessing vast estates; priests, poets and writers, editors of magazines and newspapers; political and religious leaders, all trying to reform the people, or work for the Congress or other organizations, or co-operate with the existing institutions in power.

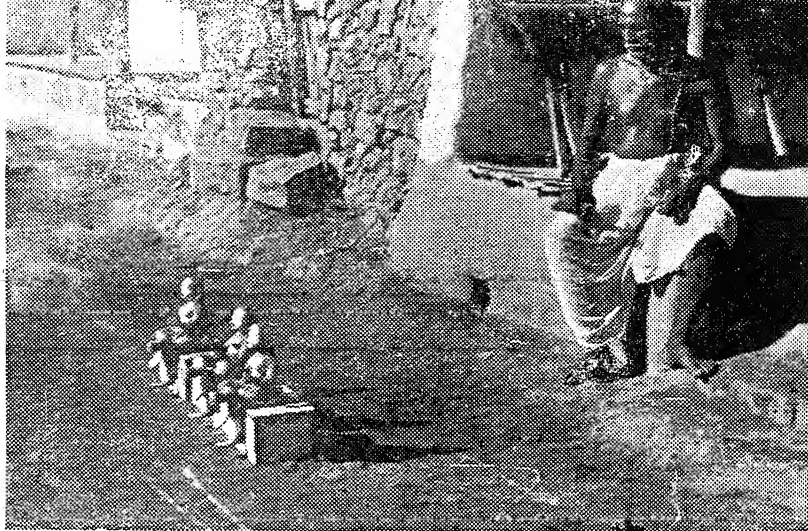
The majority, the ryots, are the simple, humble and hospitable peasants cultivating and living on the produce of their mother earth. And then there are the weavers who produce any cloth from the roughest *khaddar* to the softest silks; the potters whose wheels shape the vessels that are needed by every village home; the village workmen with magic fingers who chisel from mere chips of wood the pretty toys and models that make the delight of children and grown-ups and the

boatmen who ply their crafts along the canals that link the busy ports of the east coast to Madras—artisans who struggle the entire day to earn a few annas for their livelihood.

In 1611 the first Dutch factory in India was established at Masulipatam; this port was, for decades to come, a great centre for the export of India's spices and textile products. After the Dutch, the French came to power; then Clive came upon the scene. Vizagapatam was raided by a local chief who appealed to Clive for support against the French, and Clive was quick to seize the opportunity thus presented to him. An expedition which had come into the Northern Circars under orders from Clive, inflicted a defeat on the superior French force. Bussy and Lally were engaged at Madras; Masulipatam was poorly defended, and the storming of the town by Colonel Forde resulted in the complete conquest of the Northern Circars.

Masulipatam slowly dwindled in importance as Bezawada rose in prominence. Twelve miles inland to Bundar (Masulipatam) is this busy trading town of to-day. Freight boats, coastal craft, and railway waggons bring and take away goods to and from Bezawada. Through the town flows the Krishna river, for Bezawada is a busy junction of railways and waterways: from here the Buckingham Canal flows towards Madras, and the Bundar Canal joins Bezawada with Masulipatam.

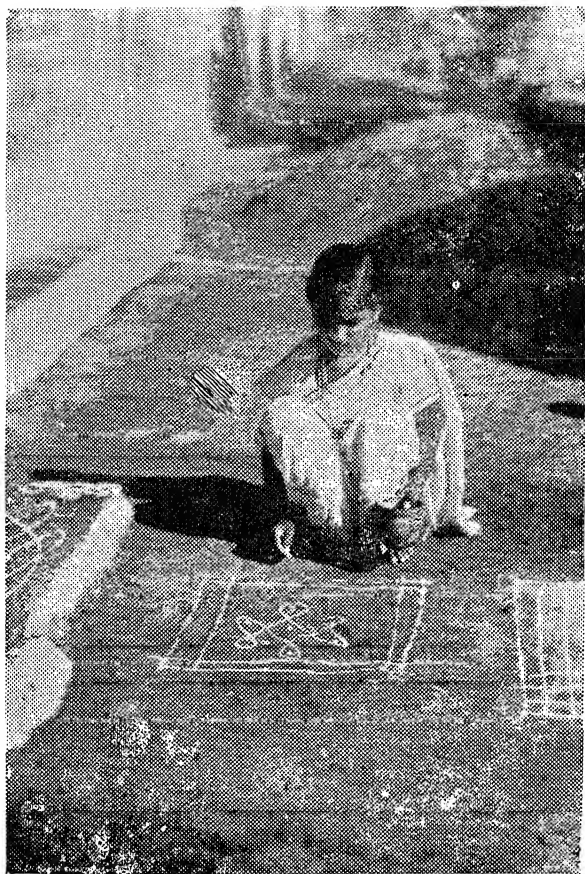
Everywhere in the Delta are vast fields of crops—rice, lentils, maize—and plantations of tobacco and sugar-cane. In fact, the entire Krishna District is fertile. Sometimes, right in the midst of the fields, the canals



The village workman with magic fingers chisels from mere chips of wood the pretty toys and models that are the joy of the Telugus, young and old.



Basavanna, the Nodding Bull, with his gay caparison, is ushered from door to door by his master, the imposing mendicant. Basavanna prophesies the future with nods to the questions put by his master.



At dawn the doorways are swept clean and sprinkled with water. The housewife or her daughter decorates the threshold.

pass and barges with huge white sails like birds floating over the greenery move up and down the waters. Here, the peasants are reaping the lentils, and there, they are filling paddy into bags; elsewhere they are bundling straw, and now and then rows of peasants are threshing dry lentil stalks to collect the grain. Late in the afternoon, when the east wind rises, a peasant standing on a bullock cart empties his basket of paddy from a height of about ten feet, thus letting nature do the winnowing.

Life in the village homes is simple; at dawn, doorways are cleaned and water is sprinkled by the housewife or her daughter, who then decorates the threshold by drawing pretty designs in white chalk, which resemble Lissajou's figures. Evenings are whiled away in prayer or song, and the peaceful silent nights seem almost devoid of life:

The monotony of this routine existence is broken by the roving bands of dramatists, or by monologuists who chant and explain the epics. Basavanna, the Nodding Bull, with his gay caparison and accompanied by his master, the imposing mendicant, visits the villages and goes from door to door.

Hundreds throng to some shady corner of the village to watch, bet, and win or lose on their favourite entrants, and to enjoy the fluttering contests between the combatants, the cocks. Even the old ballads of the Andhras tell of these battling chanticleers.

Five hundred rupees is the prize; from a neighbouring village a ram has come to fight the trained pride of the hamlet, the winner of many laurels. Noise, then murmurs and, suddenly, silence reigns except for

the butt, butt, butt of ram against ram. Cheers from those who have backed the victor; screams and shouts of joy from the trainers of the winning ram, and the hero of the day is garlanded and carried away in triumph.

From petty hamlets and villages the crowds go to some neighbouring town; tradition has filled their calender with many festivals, and the people certainly do celebrate on those occasions. They visit the temples, watch dances or processions, make merry and feast, and spend entire nights hearing a recital of the epics, or watching shadow-plays. Others, of a gayer turn of mind gaze at the gypsy belles, the Lambadis, who dance and whirl in circles.

Day-time actors still frequent these provinces; they are so called because they perform their plays during the day and not, as is usual, after sunset. The hero and an actor in woman's clothes to represent the heroine, a musician with an instrument like a musette, and a drummer are the four that usually form a troupe. Modern times, of course, have brought them competition in the screeching loud-speaker and the movies.

Zamindar and peasant, all work in the fields on the first day of the full moon of the sowing season; this is a great festival. Every peasant is busy from early dawn cleaning the plough and other agricultural implements, while the mistress of the family offers worship to the plough, the yoke, and the oxen. One pair or many, whether belonging to the rich or to the poor, the bullocks are all decorated and smeared with auspicious saffron and red spots. The underlying spirit of the festival is the same for all: as the deep furrows are





Their stage is the street, their performances are in the day-time, their make-up is their own technique. From village to village go these "day-time" actors to earn their living. They are called "day-time actors" precisely because they perform only in the day-time.



Much in vogue is this style of coiffure with the Telugu peasant



A very popular rural entertainment is the cock-fight.

made, every peasant silently prays for peace and plenty in the coming year.

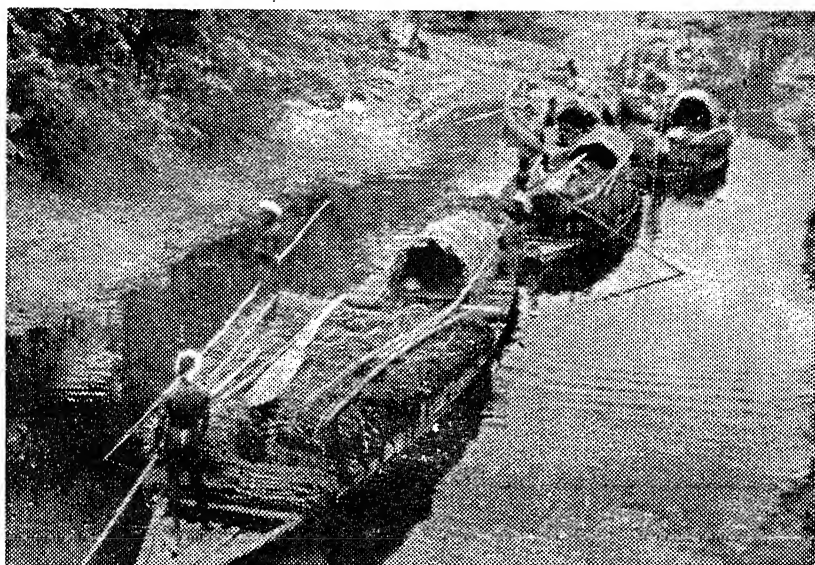
The rural evenings in these regions are calm and restful. Somewhere a peasant sings on his way home; elsewhere, a band of villagers entone a chorus; along the canals fires in the freight boats are lighted and, if the moon rises early, the boatman's song lends charm to the pale, white bulging sails that glide softly over the canals fed by the waters of the Krishna and Godavari.

## Capital of the Carnatic

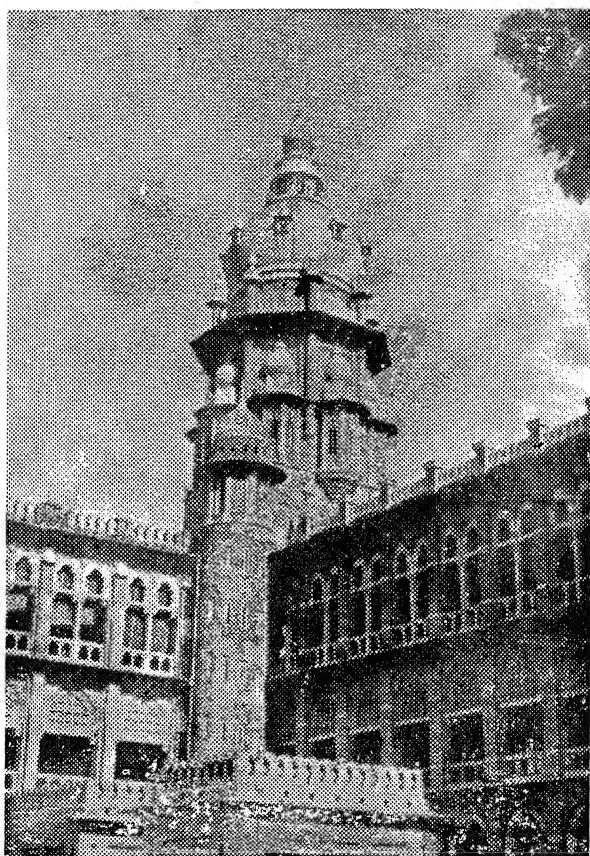
**A** LONG a strip of the Coromandel stretches one of the most beautiful Marinas—the Marina of Madras. Parallel to this white strip of sand, more than three miles long, runs the macadamized road of this Fort St. George, one of the early settlements of the British in India.

Three hundred years ago a fortified factory and a few villages stood here; one of them, the fishing village, still lives and thrives. The fishermen have not changed their profession since those times; they set out in their midget riders of the waves, the *catamarans*, to wrest a livelihood from the harvest of the sea. According to a seventeenth century traveller, "....they seize 4, 5, or 6 large pieces of buoyant timber together, and this they call a catamaran upon which they can load 3 or 4 tons weight. When they go fishing, they are ready with very small ones of the like kind, that will carry four, three, two, or one man only, and upon these sad things they will boldly adventure out of shore, but indeed they swim as naturally as spaniel dogs." Practically nothing has changed in the lives of these fisherfolk since the last two hundred and fifty years, except that they have forgotten that their ancestors used ropes of cocoanut fibre, for today, ropes are bought in the market; while the picturesque little sails made of the bark of trees come now from the local mills.

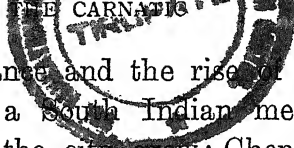
Thirty decades of history can be seen in the buildings which line the Marina, and recall the days of



The Buckingham Canal links Madras to Bezawada, the busy junction town on the Krishna River. Freight boats bring from the many towns and villages along the canal country cargo to Madras. To-day, the Buckingham Canal is an important waterway for freight boat traffic.



Crowning the Law Courts of Madras is the light-house. In World War I this light-house felt the impact of the German ship, Emden's shelling. It continues to send a beam for miles into the sea to guide the ships in the Bay of Bengal.



Arcot's historical importance and the rise of Madras from mere villages into a South Indian metropolis. Around the solitary fort the city grew; Chennapatna became Black Town that flourished into the George Town of our day. Commerce developed, business houses flourished, the population increased and, like Bombay, Karachi, and Calcutta, Madras became an important city. North, south, and west the city expanded; communications and transport grew; for eight miles inland there was bustle and life. Capital of the Presidency, Madras grew into Greater Madras. Tramways, buses, and suburban trains brought the farther limits of Greater Madras within the reach of the common man. Many of the colleges and private residences moved from the heart of the town to more pleasant surroundings in the environs. From Black Town to present-day George Town, how Time has changed Madras!

In the street-names of George Town still linger the vestiges of old Madras. China Bazaar Road was probably the selling centre of goods imported from China. Armenian Street got its name, perhaps, from a colony of wealthy Armenian merchants that peopled this street; and Coral Merchant Street was where those merchants plied their trade. But the streets, too, have changed their aspect since the days when Black Town was the City and Fort St. George the settlement's defense and administrative centre. From old drawings alone can the mind picture something of the changes that have taken place.

Changes, however, seem to have been slower in the corridors of Government Offices where peons in

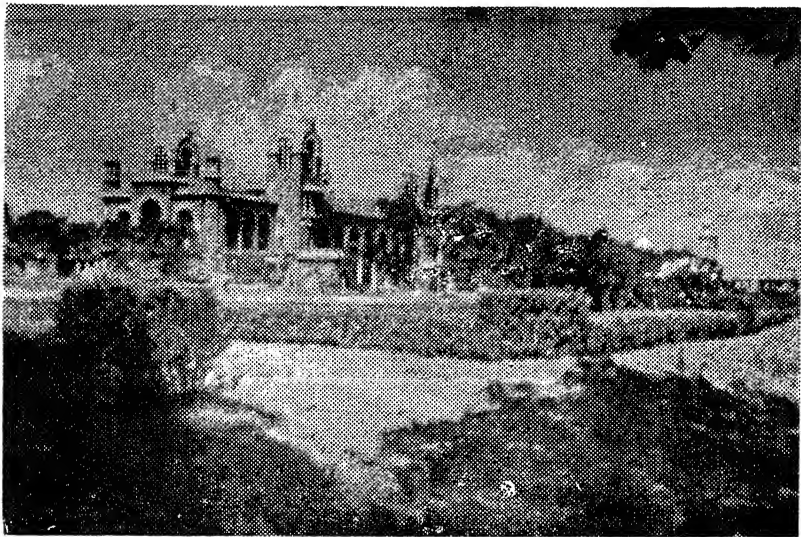
52  
PICTURES AND PEN PICTURES

remarkable liveries wander like phantoms of a past age. The ankle-length skirts of immense width with sash and crose-belt, and the stiff flat turbans are reminiscent of the dress worn by the Mahratta king of Tanjore, one hundred and fifty years ago—they stand out in striking incongruity with the suits of European style and the *dhoties* and *kurtas* of the rest of the population. These voluminous liveries seem to be a lingering memory of the original occupants of the palace of the Nawabs of Arcot, before it became the Secretariat of Madras.

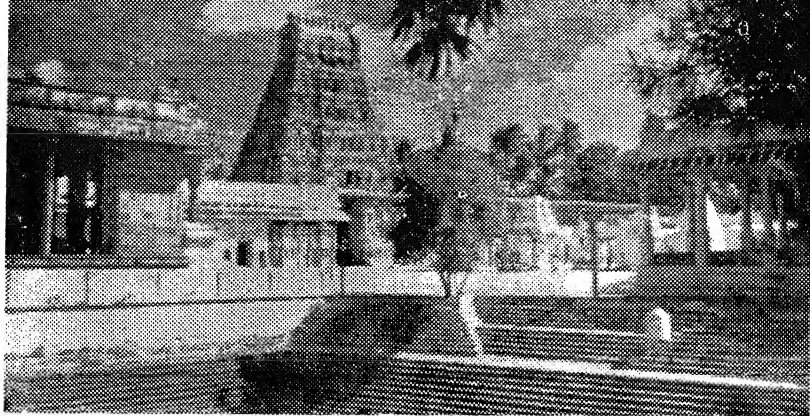
The Indo-Saracenic architecture with broad-curved domes, well-proportioned arches, and stone screens has peculiar charm. Of more recent date are the High Court buildings, the attendant Law College, the Connemara Library wherein are kept priceless ancient documents, and the Museum that contains a wealth of historical, pre-historic, and paleolithic finds.

In the cemetery of St. Mary's church, behind the Law College, the tomb of David Yale stands erect and severe, a movement of special interest for its unexpected connection with New England of the seventeenth century. Elihu Yale, whose father had emigrated from Boston to England, when a young man joined the service of the East India Company as a writer. By 1661 he had considerably bettered his position in Madras, and was appointed acting Governor on several occasions. In 1687, he was confirmed as Governor. When he retired, he sent home to his native town of Boston a cargo of gifts that included books and East India goods; this cargo was sold for £. 562-12s, which was donated to the

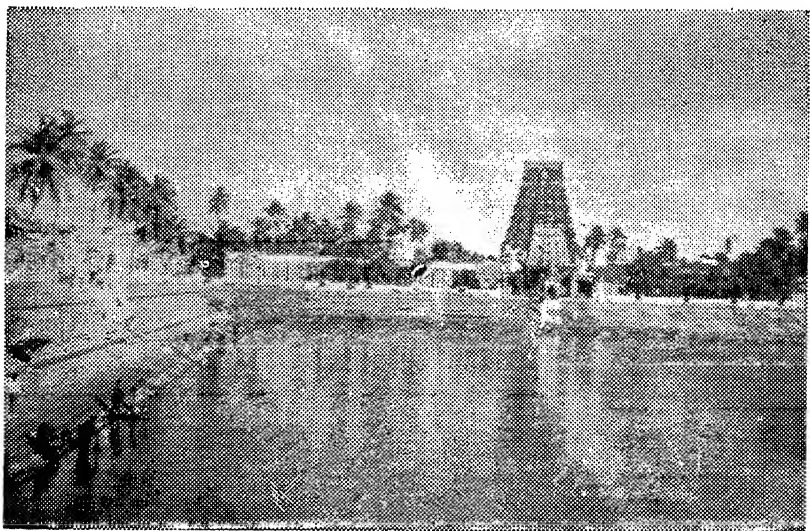




The house of the Madras Senate. Built in 1879, it is another of the many interesting buildings in Indo-Saracenic style that adorn the Marina.



North of Madras is an ancient temple, in Tiruvottiyur. Many residents of Madras visit this temple regularly. In the days of the Chola dynasty, the Tamil Rajas gave many grants to this temple. The Tamil poet, Pattinathar, was an ardent devotee of this Tiruvottiyur shrine to Siva. There is a shrine to the first Guru Shankaracharya within the precincts of the temple to commemorate his stay in the temple.



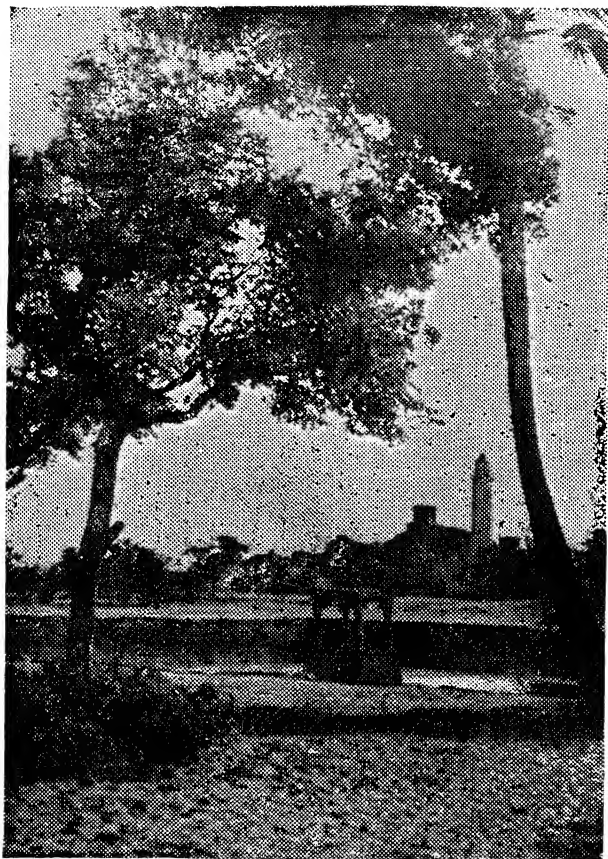
The temple tank is, in many ways, a public bath, though it is sacred. Every temple has a tank attached to it. These steps give an idea of the length of just one side of the temple and tank in Mylapore, Madras.

Collegiate School of Connection—this led to the foundation of the University that bears the name of Yale. The first marriage to be performed in St. Mary's church was that of Elihu Yale with the daughter of a local merchant; the couple lost their small son, David, aged two. His tomb in the old cemetery represents a link, stretching across an ocean and a continent, between Madras and far-off Boston.

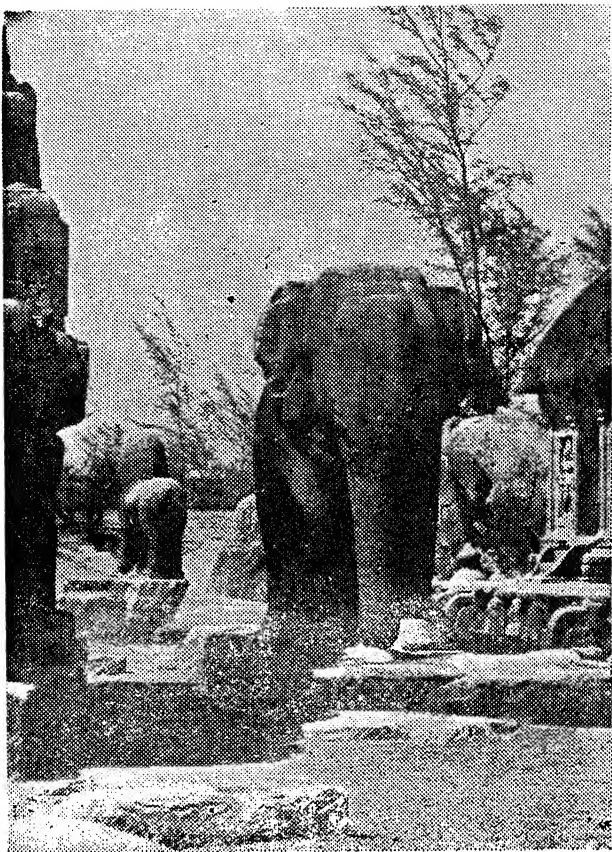
Of the villages that once surrounded George Town and that are now a part of the city, Triplicane was famous for its beautiful temple to Vishnu already in the eighth century. Mylapore is mentioned by the Graeco-Roman geographer, Ptolemy, in the century immediately after Christ—its temple is of great antiquity. Adyar is famed for its Theosophical Society. Arab mariners of the tenth century knew of San Thome that appears to be the earliest place of Christian worship on the east coast and its foundation is attributed to St. Thomas the Apostle who suffered martyrdom on or near St. Thomas' Mount. Like a heartline broad Mount Road runs from Fort St. George to the Mount of St. Thomas.

The vast artificial harbour of Madras occupies over a mile of that long stretch of white sand of the beach. In the shimmer of a summer's day, the white, burning sands conjure up the Sahara; but with the turn of the breeze in the evening, crowds slowly come here to sit at their favourite spots, to sing, or to stroll to the incessant moaning of the wave. Almost at twilight the multi-coloured saris, the gaily dressed children, and the dark green casuarinas dotted along the sands present an enchanting scene.

Madras is a busy city, as were the many other ports along this very Coromandel far back in Indian history ; within easy reach of this capital are all the ports and trading centres and all the beautiful and historic centres of South India—the South that is a paradise for the artist, the cameraman, the historian, and the archaeologist; the picturesque and beautiful South of India.



The light-house of Mahabalipuram ; known more commonly as Seven Pagodas. In the days of yore this was a great port-town of the Coromandel coast. The light-house is of modern construction, but no more do ships come here, for it is now a deserted shore.



The Elephant and the Lion. Rock sculptures are seen in Seven Pagodas that were executed about twelve centuries ago, if not more. They belong to the period of the Pallavas. The sculptures and temples at Seven Pagodas are acknowledged to be some of the finest archaeological and artistic specimens in India.

## Some Sketches of the South

A TIME there was when ships with bulging sails came from the Far East and far-off lands to this deserted shore; great fleets of merchant ships were fitted here, and from this forgotten port embassies were sent to the Emperor of China. Silence reigns where there was so much bustle, activity, trade and passenger traffic. In the melancholy song of the casuarina pines swaying in the sighing wind, and the distant sound of waves that wash day and night a lonely shore temple, Nature seems to mourn the fate of this solitary shore. The Shore Temple is the last of the Seven Pagodas—the other six, the story goes, lie under the sea. A modern lighthouse warns ships off this part of the coast that used to welcome them long before Madras had a harbour.

Admidst the pines is a group of temples, each one exquisitely carved and hewn out of a single rock. These rock temples, and the cave temples further on, and the monolithic animals—the lion, the elephant, and the bull—were executed in the prosperous days of this Seven Pagodas, between the third and eighth century—when the dynasty of the Pallavas ruled in Southern India. They built temples over a large portion of their territories, but the monoliths are their best claim to remembrance.

The seat of these Pallavas was Conjeevaram, Kanchi of their times, and one of the seven sacred cities like Hardwar and Ujjain—Kanchi, the Golden City of

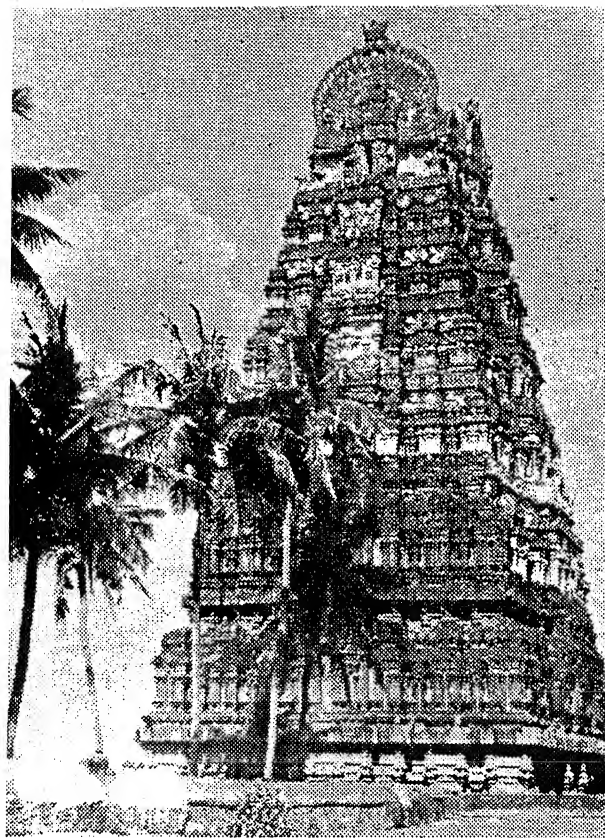
PICTURES AND PEN-PICTURES

Sanskrit literature. "Amongst flowers, the jasmine; amongst cities, Kanchi", runs an ancient verse and, indeed, even today the eye perceives a well-planned city rich in temples. Countless pilgrims still come to the annual Juggernaut festival; they wander through the halls of a hundred pillars and the halls of a thousand pillars, and they look with admiration upon the gigantic towers that present a panorama of fifteen centuries of architecture—centuries in which flourished Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, too, in Kanchi, the great centre of learning.

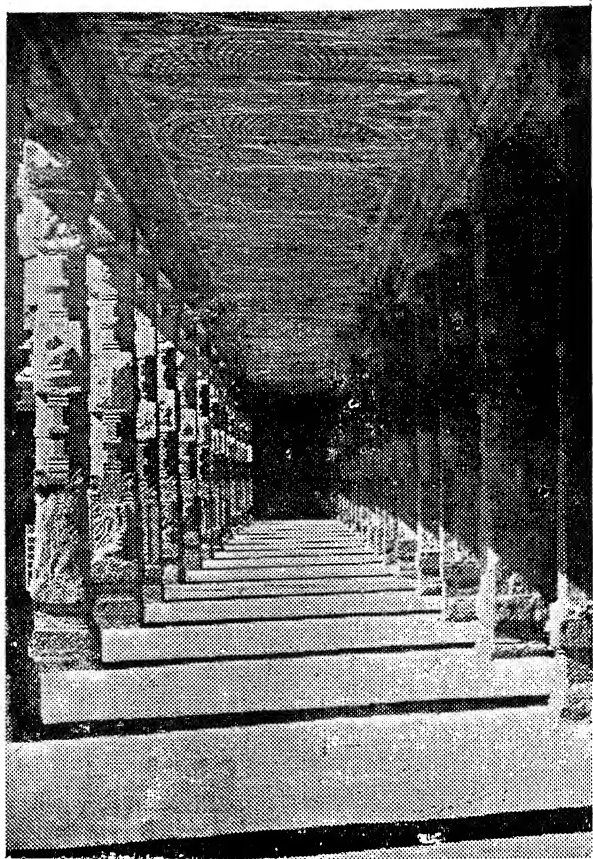
South of Conjeevaram are the plains of the east coast and the Delta of the Cauvery River, a region rich in crops, studded with temples, and filled with history. From Conjeevaram to Cape Comorin, since the early centuries of our era, the temples and monuments stand evidence to the faith, the love of art, and the prosperity of the successive dynasties that built them. The dams across the Cauvery River—the oldest dams in India—prove how much importance both people and monarchs attached to the river that gives life to the soil of their regions.

On an island of this Cauvery River is the Srirangam temple to Vishnu, visited by devotees from everywhere in India. In the crowded streets round the temple, like the towers of the temple that soar high above the buildings of the town, the elephant of Vishnu's shrine moves majestic and calm. Here, pilgrims buy their offerings for the idol; there, they throng in the corridors of the pillared halls; and on the river, boatmen ply their coracles for the faithful who go midstream to offer flowers or leave lamps to float upon the waters of the

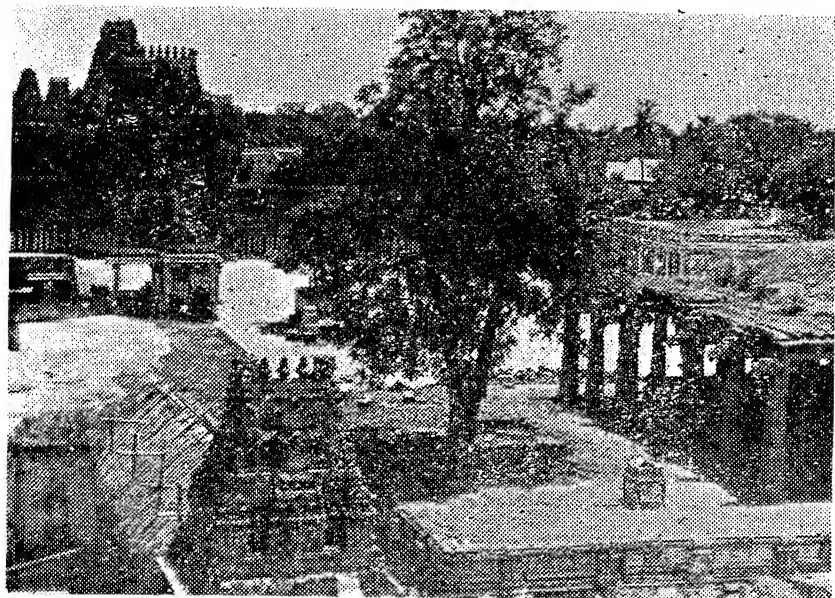




This great pyramidal tower with its myriads of carvings is in the Siva temple at Kanchi, Conjeevaram of to-day.



The Hall of Pillars in the temple of Siva in Kanchi.



Temple towers and pillared halls are a feature of the many temples of Kanchi. Inside the shrine of Kamakshi, one of the celebrated temples of India.

sacred stream. Beyond the farther bank is the Trichinopoly Rock which rises out of the plain to a height of about two hundred and seventy feet. On the summit of the Rock is a temple to Ganesh, the God of Wisdom and the Remover of Obstacles, that overlooks Trichinopoly and its environs. Despite the torrid sun of Tamilnad, pilgrims climb the steep hewn steps from dawn to dusk, to visit this shrine of undiminished sanctity.

Close to the foot of the Rock is a house that brings back to mind some famous battles of South India and the struggles and rise to power of a captain in the East India Company forces—the house of Robert Clive. The reflection of a church steeple in the waters of the sacred tank, for a moment creates the illusion that Nature knows no difference of religious. Elsewhere, outside the limits of the old town, a twentieth century Trichinopoly is at work with the machinery of the present age.

Somewhere in the early eleventh century, a block of stone weighing some eighty-five tons was dragged up an inclined plane and set to crown the temple tower of Tanjore. The gigantic carved tower with its rock dome is still there, two hundred odd feet high. Like every temple of Siva, this one has its stone bull—one of the largest in India. Carvings in profusion cover the tower, the pillars, and the walls; and round the vast square of the temple are the ramparts of the ancient fort.

For a time after the rule of the Tamil dynasties, a line of kings who claimed descent from the house of Shivaji the Mahratta, practically settled in Tanjore. One prominent relic of these rulers is the palace in

which a library has found a haven for its treasures, very precious and ancient palm-leaf manuscripts. Reminiscent of the missionary who lived many years of toil in Tanjore is the church of Schwarz.

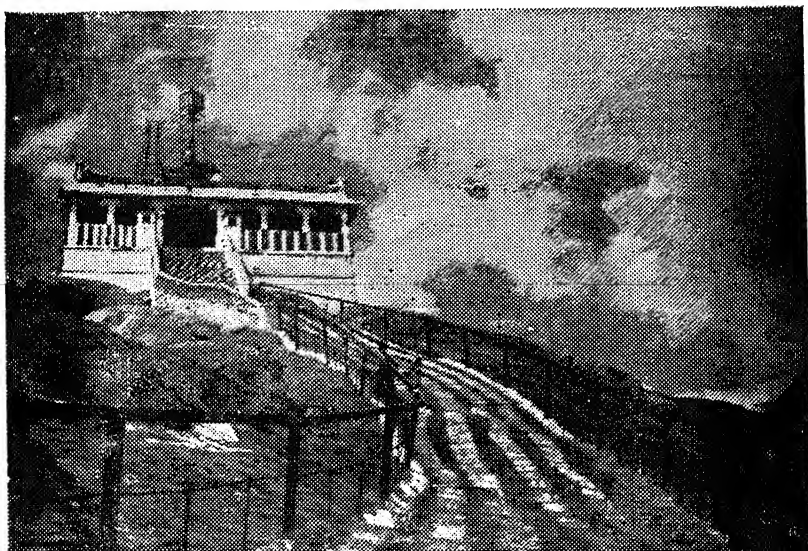
In the town, the main thoroughfare is busy with its little shops, its beggars, its scorpion-trainers, its hawkers, and its tiny wayside stalls of fly-blackened fruit: oxen-drawn hackney carts, awkward, blary-horned buses and motor-cars, reckless cyclists, jostling pedestrians, and streams of country folk carrying strange assortments of sundry village produce all mingle with unconscious incongruity in this Tanjore that is as old as it is semi-new.

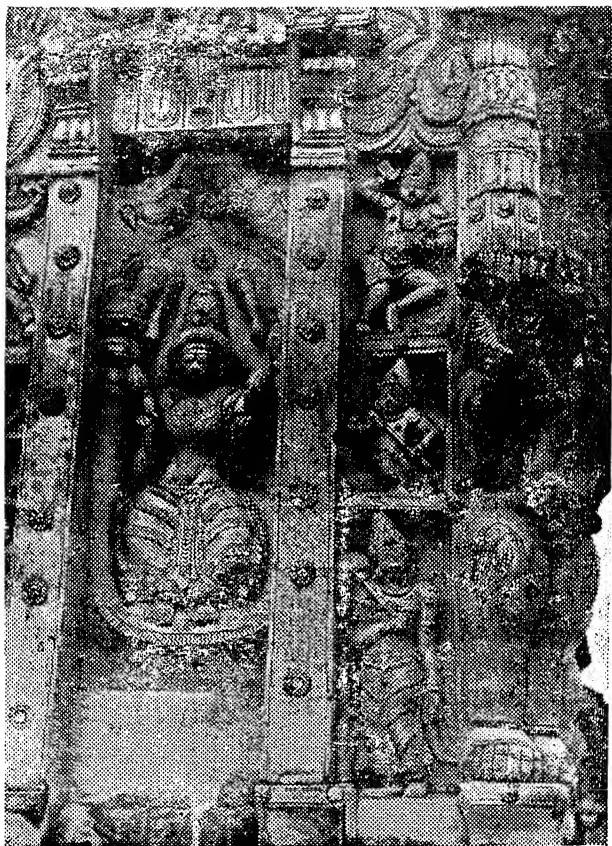
Dusty roads lead out of Tanjore to its environs and neighbouring towns. Along the roads the eye perceives a succession of ruined temples and wayside shrines: bridges connect the towns of this tract through which flow the many branches of the Cauvery. Every town has its temples and its own history; for, it was in the South that the historic houses of the Pallavas, the Cholas, the Cheras, and the Pandyas ruled. The Pandyas had Madura for their capital, an ancient city where lived great Tamil scholars, and where Tamil literature reached its meridian; Madura with its wonderful temple to the Goddess of the Almond Eyes—Meenakshi of Madura.

The peasants are busy in their fields; while the men plough and the women sow, the children chase away the crows. In the harvest season there is threshing and winnowing of the grain. As the eye gazes on these scenes and transmits them to the brain, the mind is filled with questions. What would this region



The elephant of Vishnu's famous shrine in Srirangam.





A relief of Laxmi, the Goddess of Wealth. In the Pallava temple of Conjeevaram, the haut-reliefs speak of the fine chisel of artists who lived more than a thousand years ago.

have been if the five hundred mile long river had not enriched the soil with its waters; why do the peasants, in spite of all these rich crops and lands, give an impression more of poverty than of contentment and happiness; what would the towns have been if, through the centuries, the ancestors of these peasants had not cultivated the earth and contributed to their wealth and their temples of antiquity.....

O'er the hills that rise above the plains of Madura, over the mountains on whose heights and slopes are forests of teak and other timber; plantations of tapioca bananas, pine-apples and wild flowers, and plams and verdant trees; o'er these hills and beyond is the territory of the kings—vassals of Sri Padmanabha—the Vanchidasas of Travancore.

Long before engineers laid the winding railroads uphill, down dale, and through tunnels, pilgrims from the farthest north, too, trod their weary mountain road to reach the land famed for its temple where the preserver of the Hindu Pantheon, Vishnu, chose to rest on his mighty serpent, Ananta. In Trivandrum, today, stands the renowned shrine of Padmanabha. The sculptors who carved this idol must have been master craftsmen; for in its presence, the mind is calm and the reposant attitude of Padmanabha inspires peace.

As the eye takes in the beauty of the landscapes of Travancore—the red earth, the hills and the verdant trees, the backwaters that reflect the glory of the setting sun—a thought crosses the mind, and it is a question; was it the beauty of this land that tempted even a god to recline and weave the garland of repose?



## Queen of the West Coast

**W**HEN Cambay was famed for its busy harbour, Bombay was a mere fishing village. When Charles II of England married Catherine of Braganza in 1663, the King of Spain and Portugal gave the site of the seven little islands as part of the dowry with his daughter—Bombay fetched, then, an income of £10 a year to the Crown!

Today, many trains come from everywhere in India to the serried platforms of Victoria Terminus and into the vast and modern concrete-built station, Bombay Central. Electrically propelled trains run to and fro between Bombay and its suburbs and nearby cities. Pylons of massive steel carry the lines of hydro-electric power supply from somewhere in the Western Ghats to the busiest city of the west coast for distribution and supply to the inhabitants. Pipelines bring water from the neighbouring lakes for a city inhabited by millions and visited by hundreds of thousands from many parts of the world. Broad roads paved with concrete bear the burden of the traffic that pours night and day from suburban areas and far-off places into the city. The age-old bullock cart is still there, but its pneumatic-tyred wheels tell of ox-power harnessed to modernized methods—the march of time.

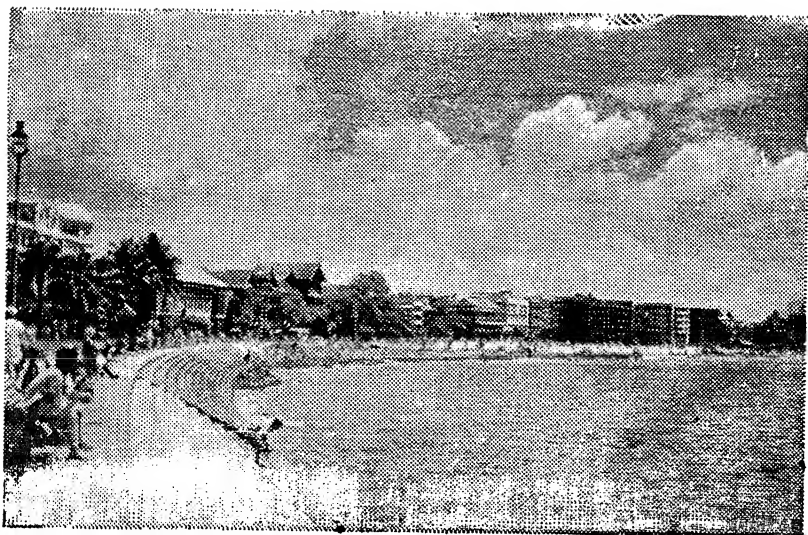
City of many leading industrial enterprises, home of the foremost commercial houses and textile mills in the country, Bombay, the populous and busy harbour city, pulsates with life of commoner and capitalist.



Back Bay and Marine Drive from Malabar Hill.



A fountain in a busy part of  
Bombay-



Like a costly pendent the island metropolis adorns the peninsula; trading ships and ocean liners from all over the world touch at its vast harbour and make of Bombay the Queen City of the Arabian Sea.

Like most events in history, the story of this city is simple; it shows a humble beginning and, in three centuries, the achievement of importance and fame. What a parallel to the lives of great men!

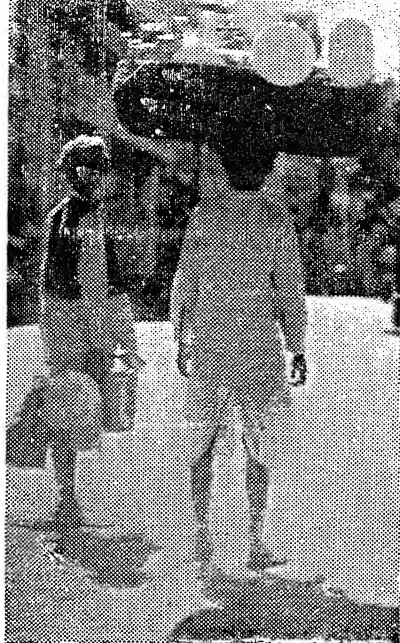
At the time that Surat became a prey to raiding hordes, when European powers were contesting for supremacy in the City of the Tapti, the British happened to make Bombay their headquarters for the west coast factories. In spite of the repeated visits of Portuguese men-o'-war, of Mahratta armies, and of pirate ships, the harbour town of Bombay flourished with its British factories.

Those were the decades when Salsette with Thana as its chief port town was a centre of Jesuit activity. Mahim came next in importance, and Parel was an island of garden houses. Pydhoni was where people were wont to stop and wash their feet in the stream before entering Mumbadevi's shrine; Colaba was where the Koli fishermen had plied their fishing trade since early times. This group of islands became, with the passing centuries, "the island metropolis of our day" that counts within its municipal limits Colaba, the Fort, Gamdevi, Mazagoan, Malabar Hill, Pydhoni, Byculla, Parel, Dadar, Matunga, and Mahim. All these names mean, perhaps, very little today when latest methods of transport take the people in their hundreds from Mahim to Colaba; yet, time was when people in small numbers sailed across the waters to get from

one little island to the other—the seven little isles that came to merge into the one island of Bombay, the Queen City of the West Coast.

From sea to sea, from Apollo Bunder to Juhu, from Marine Drive to Mahim, Bombay throbs with life in a different way to any other Indian city. In its Stock Exchange and its cotton godowns, in its mills that work night and day, in its restaurants that open at dawn and close in the early hours of the morning, in its business areas and its bustling population, the quill dips to write of a Bombay with mansions and *maidans*, like Azad Maidan where politicians have preached to millions of men eager to follow the torch of freedom, and nearby Boribunder and locality where, at times, *lathi* charges were the law of the day; with many-storeyed buildings and its variety of people from many parts of the world and the provinces of India. Witnesses of olden times still survive, however, be it in Colaba, Mahim, Danda, or Versova—the fishing villages of Bombay.

Stand by the G. P. O. and look skyward, and the eye can perceive the message-carriers of ancient and modern times, pigeons and telegraph wires. Stroll through Dhobi Talao and the mind can sense the association between the past and the present, with the washing hanging out to dry in the nearby fields near the imposing building of an air-conditioned cinema. Gaze during lunch time at the men and women running along the streets balancing baskets loaded with tiffin-carriers on their heads to feel the fact that they preserve a traditional method of bearing the burden. Behold the fisherwomen in the afternoons in the full vigour of their physical beauty carrying fresh fish from



He who brings lunch to the  
office population of Bombay.



Coconuts for the thirsty of Chowpatti



Across Back Bay and the Island of Bombay are seen the Island of Elephanta and other rocks in Bombay Harbour.



A View of the Harbour of Bombay.



the villages to the city markets, and in this the mind and the eye can perceive, perhaps, the growth of a mere fishing village into a metropolis. Time passes though traditions remain.

"To market, to market"....to Crawford Market. Crowds pass every day through the wings of this spacious structure; housewives and servants, city-dwellers and tourists, Indians and foreigners; in brief, all sorts of people from all sorts of places. Small wonder they all come to Crawford Market, for here, everything is available and everybody can be served; such a buying and selling and bargaining and arguments. Here are all things from the necessities of life to the articles *de luxe*, from green cabbages to face creams.

Around the pretty Jumma Masjid with its impressive minarets and white marble dome are the streets lined with booths and shops that sell saris, swadeshi goods, cotton piece-goods, wollen material, ready-made articles, cutlery and crockery, footwear fit for prince are peasant, and many thousands of things manufactured all over the world.

Follow the crowds from these godowns and markets to and through Bhuleshwar and they will lead to perhaps the most congested quarter of Bombay. Bhuleshwar's narrow lanes and streets, paved with flagstones, are crowded with hawkers and merchants whose shops purvey anything that glitters, from tinsel to pure gold lace. There are many small shrines and many well-known temples in this area; to them, since Bhuleshwar was famous, have come the pilgrims and pigeons that abound in temple, tower, and building where the people of Bhuleshwar dwell. The



bells of the temples and the bustling crowds combine to make of this quarter a centre of noise, and vehicles of all kinds from the humble hand-cart to the luxurious limousine add to the din and confusion, while hawkers add the last touch. Ear and mind gather impressions of sight and sound in an indescribable confusion.

The finale is the spectacle of speculators who come to try their hand at converting overnight the small sum of money which they possess into a handsome fortune. Cotton prices, their rise and fall, are closely related to the lives of these men. At times they work themselves into a frenzy, or may be they are hounded by the police—either way the scene is a pandemonium best observed between the hours of six in the evening and two after midnight!

Crowning a knoll whose rocky base is washed by the waves of the Arabian Sea that skirts the island of Bombay stands the temple of the famed goddess, Mahalakshmi; the site itself, obviously, gave its name to the neighbourhood, the locality of Mahalaxmi of the Bombay of our day. A panoramic view from the temple presents to the eye the entire locality including the modern race course of the Western India Turf Club, popularly known as the Mahalaxmi Race Course. Pilgrims come to pay their homage to Mahalaxmi on the knoll, as they have always done; the race course of Mahalakshmi draws crowds now as it has done since the first meeting of the Turf Club. So, crowds come to the locality of Mahalaxmi, but who gets the deeper contentment, the pilgrim or the punter, pray?

The concrete roads from Mahalaxmi lead either to Worli Sea Face, Malabar Hill, or Chowpatty and Marine

Drive, and to Colaba and Apollo Bunder. Every one of those names belongs to picturesque Bombay. Look upon the sun as it sets in the Arabian Sea from Worli Hill, and nature can be seen in a glorious mood. Look down from Malabar Hill and gaze upon the gigantic city that is Bombay; drive up and down the Marine Drive and mingle with the thousands who come for their share of the refreshing breezes; walk under the massive Gateway of India just to get the feeling that it is symbolic of Bombay's importance as a port of the Indian Ocean. Walk up and down the strand and listen to the stream of music from the "finest hotel in the East", and other hotels and restaurants—only then can the mind realize why Bombay leads as a cosmopolitan city.

But this story must include the busy arts and industries of the seven isles that are now one. It must tell of film producers and studios and film laboratories; of newspapers and newspapermen, of reporters and chroniclers, of busy magnates in their offices of Ballard Estate, and Mahatma Gandhi Road; in brief, of Fort, Bombay. It must tell, too, of Stocks and Share-Brokers, pedlars, beggars, hawkers and merchants, lawyers, statesmen, writers and hundreds of others with a hundred other professions that crowd the streets and roads of Bombay during the hours of the day—they walk along the pavements that are the beds of many at night! As the eye sees the poor recline for the night on the stone sidewalks, the mind wonders how men who in comfort repose can forget the plight of those for whom a crowded pavement during the day is a bed at night. Bombay, too, presents the eternal question: where is contentment and how is happiness gained?

To the documentalist list, however, and to the historian, Bombay will ever remain a self-made city, a city of modest beginnings that has grown up on its own wide reputation, the city of millionaires, the city of cotton, the city with the finest natural harbour in India, the Queen of the West Coast.

And now the quill is dipped once again, this time for ink to write the concluding paragraph of this brief story of Bombay, and of this series; Pictures and Pen Pictures of India. Two friends, the camera and the quill, have facilitated the recording of many things that the mind and the eye of a documentalist and camera-man have observed in his peregrinations in this country, a country rich in its history, archaeology, art, romance, and its cultural heritage. Fifteen stories the quill has written round the many pictures that the camera has faithfully photographed; but, until the camera brings pictures for some more stories, the quill must rest for a while until, perhaps, quill and camera co-operate again to tell of some more of the many regions of this vast and interesting country, this India.

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